

A PERFORMANCE GUIDE TO *SUITE I PER CONTRABBASSO* (1983/2005)

BY FERNANDO GRILLO

by

Dorian Dean Jackman

Submitted to the faculty of the
Jacobs School of Music in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree,

Doctor of Music

Indiana University

May 2020

Accepted by the faculty of the
Indiana University Jacobs School of Music,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Music

Doctoral Committee

Marianne Kielian-Gilbert, Research Director

Kurt Muroki, Chair

Mauricio Fuks

Jeffrey Turner

24 March 2020

Copyright © 2020
Dorian Dean Jackman

Acknowledgements

This project would not have been possible without the help and support of many people. I would first like to thank my advisor Kurt Muroki, research director Dr. Marianne Kielian-Gilbert and members of my doctoral committee, Jeffrey Turner and Mauricio Fuks, for their unique and valuable contributions to this project.

I want to thank my wife Dr. Elizabeth Elmi for her help editing, translating, and giving me invaluable insight into research. Thank you to my father-in-law, Dr. Francis Elmi, for also helping me edit this document. A special thanks is due for Naz Pantaloni who generously gave me his expertise on copyright law.

I would like to acknowledge Schott Music Publishing in Mainz, Germany for generously allowing me to reproduce several score images from *Suite I*.

I also want to thank Enrico Francioni for his valuable insight into his former teacher Fernando Grillo and Stefano Sciascia for additional advice on performing *Suite I*.

I would like to thank the libraries of Indiana University-Bloomington and IUPUI-Indianapolis. I would also like to thank the public libraries of Indianapolis and Garden City, NY. These institutions allowed me a fertile space to conduct research and ultimately produce my doctoral thesis.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to my friends, colleagues, and family for their encouragement during this process. I cannot thank you enough.

Preface

Fernando Grillo (1945–2013) was a prominent double bassist who was influential in the contemporary new music scene in Europe beginning in the 1970s until his sudden death by suicide on July 23, 2013. He is responsible for pursuing a new direction for the double bass in the 1970s just as Bertram Turetzky had done in the United States during the 1960s. I discovered Grillo's name when I purchased the score to his *Suite I* at T.I.S. Music in Bloomington, Indiana. Upon first glance at the score, I was overwhelmed by the amount of notational information. Initially, I did not realize the significance of this piece. Years later, I developed an understanding of its importance as an example of the rich and varied musical and timbral capabilities of the double bass as a solo instrument.

Several critical events led me to study Grillo. At the 2009 International Society of Bassists convention, my colleague Greg Vartian-Foss insisted that I attend a solo recital given by Stefano Scodanibbio. I did not know who Scodanibbio was at the time, and I certainly did not have any strong opinions, so I attended. It was a life changing experience that had a profound impact on my musical development. I was under the limited impression that Scodanibbio developed his style of performance and composition separate from any outside influence and was a product of his own ingenuity. As I researched Scodanibbio's re-adaptation of Luciano Berio's *Sequenza XIV* for the double bass, I learned that his teacher was Fernando Grillo. Grillo's impact on Scodanibbio is apparent in the latter's composition *e/statico*. Much of Scodanibbio's compositions bear a stark resemblance to compositions by Grillo in the 1970s. Given this, it is likely that Scodanibbio developed many of his ideas for sound, control of harmonics, and employment of extended techniques at least in part from his brief period of study with Grillo.

Scodanibbio has become well known among double bassists but Grillo remains obscure despite his significant contribution to the development of the double bass. I decided to focus my research on Grillo in order to shed light on this contribution. Grillo is usually cited as the sole teacher of Scodanibbio.¹ He is also well-known as a pioneer in performing multiphonics on the double bass.² This paper will examine some possible explanations for his current obscurity and then evaluate his contributions to the double bass community. My analysis of *Suite I* will act as a case study, providing a means of examining both areas of interest.

¹ Greg Cahil. "Stefano Scodanibbio," North Bay Bohemian, November 13–19, 2003, accessed December 17, 2019, <https://www.bohemian.com/northbay/stefano-scodanibbio/Content?oid=2179273>.

² Ibid.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	iv
Preface.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Examples	viii
List of Appendices	xii
Chapter 1: Life, Career, and Historical Context.....	1
Chapter 2: Building a Legacy.....	6
Chapter 3: Notational System in <i>Suite I</i>	16
Chapter 4: A Pragmatic Approach to <i>Suite I</i>	33
Chapter 5: The Composition of <i>Suite I</i>	52
Bibliography	80

List of Examples

Example 3.1, Fernando Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , instructions, page 9.....	17
Example 3.2. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement IV, mm. 23–26.....	18
Example 3.3. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement VI, mm. 41–42.....	18
Example 3.4. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , instructions, pages 19–20.....	19
Example 3.5. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , instructions, page 17.....	20
Example 3.6. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement I, m. 63.....	20
Example 3.7. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , instructions, page 11.....	21
Example 3.8. Ottorino Respighi, <i>Fontane di Roma</i> , movement IV, m. 24.....	22
Example 3.9. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , instructions, page 20.....	22
Example 3.10. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , instructions, page 20.....	22
Example 3.11. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , instructions, page 21.....	23
Example 3.12. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , instructions, page 15.....	23
Example 3.13. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement I, mm. 63–64.....	24
Example 3.14. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , instructions, page 22.....	24
Example 3.15. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , instructions, page 22.....	25
Example 3.16. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement I, m. 61.....	25
Example 3.17. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , instructions, page 15.....	26
Example 3.18. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , instructions, page 17.....	27
Example 3.19. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement II, m. 59.....	28
Example 3.20. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement IV, mm. 1–2.....	28
Example 3.21. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , instructions, page 17.....	29

Example 3.22. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement II, m. 57.....	29
Example 3.23. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , instructions, page 14.....	30
Example 3.24. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement I, m. 1.....	31
Example 3.25. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement I, mm. 1–6.....	32
Example 4.1. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement I, mm. 1–2.....	34
Example 4.2. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement I, mm. 1–2.....	35
Example 4.3. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement II, m. 77.....	36
Example 4.4. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement II, m. 67.....	36
Example 4.5. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement II, m. 67.....	37
Example 4.6. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement II, m. 77.....	37
Example 4.7. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement I, m. 5.....	38
Example 4.8. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement I, m. 5.....	39
Example 4.9. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement I, mm. 2–3.....	40
Example 4.10. Igor Stravinsky, <i>L'Oiseau de feu</i> , “ <i>Firebird Suite</i> ” (1910 version), Danse Infernale, Rehearsal 135.....	40
Example 4.11. Maurice Ravel, <i>Rapsodie espagnole</i> , movement I, 2 measures before the end; movement III, 3 measures before the end.....	41
Example 4.12. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement I, m. 51.....	42
Example 4.13. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement VI, mm. 41–42.....	42
Example 4.14. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement VI, mm. 41–42.....	42
Example 4.15. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement IV, m. 44.....	43
Example 4.16. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement IV, m. 44.....	43
Example 4.17. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement III, m. 95.....	44

Example 4.18. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement I, mm. 1–2.....	44
Example 4.19. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement I, mm. 1–2.....	45
Example 4.20. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement II, m. 58.....	46
Example 4.21. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement I, m. 71.....	46
Example 4.22. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement IV, mm. 1–2.....	47
Example 4.23. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement II, mm. 73–74.....	48
Example 4.24. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement II, mm. 73–74.....	48
Example 4.25. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement VI, m. 24.....	49
Example 5.1. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement I, mm. 115–120.....	55
Example 5.2. J. S. Bach, <i>Suite No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1008</i> , movement I, mm. 59–62.....	55
Example 5.3. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement V, mm. 1–2.....	57
Example 5.4. J. S. Bach, <i>Suite No. 5 in C minor, BWV 1011</i> , movement V, mm. 1–2.....	57
Example 5.5. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement V, mm. 27–28.....	58
Example 5.6. J. S. Bach, <i>Suite No. 5 in C minor</i> , movement V, mm. 15–6.....	58
Example 5.7. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement VI, mm. 1–2.....	59
Example 5.8. J. S. Bach, <i>Suite No. 2 in D minor</i> , movement VI, mm. 1–4.....	60
Example 5.9. J. S. Bach, <i>Suite No. 5 in D minor</i> , movement VI, mm. 1–2.....	60
Example 5.10. J. S. Bach, <i>Suite No. 5 in D minor</i> , movement VI, mm. 19–20.....	61
Example 5.11. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement VI, m. 48.....	61
Example 5.12. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement VI, mm. 19–24.....	62
Example 5.13. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement IV, m. 44.....	63
Example 5.14. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement II, mm. 63–82.....	65–66
Example 5.15. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement I, mm. 50–51.....	68

Example 5.16. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement VI, mm. 54–56.....	68
Example 5.17. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement III, mm. 86–91.....	70
Example 5.18. Grillo, <i>Suite I</i> , movement VI, mm. 54–56.....	71

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Notational Chart of Grillo's Symbols.....	73
Appendix B: Schott Copyright License.....	79

Chapter 1: LIFE, CAREER, AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Fernando Grillo was born July 20, 1945, in Foggia, Italy. Grillo first began his musical studies on guitar as a teenager.¹ He began formally studying the double bass with Lucio Buccarella (double bassist with *I musicisti di Roma*) after someone suggested playing the instrument.² This led him to pursue a music degree at the Conservatory of Music “F. Morlacchi” in Perugia, Italy. At the conservatory, he studied double bass performance with Corrado Penta who was a member of the Orchestra della Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome.³ While a music student, Grillo became fascinated with Johann Sebastian Bach and, more specifically, with his violoncello suites. Grillo developed the conviction that the cello suites must only be played on the intended instrument. This led him to pursue additional studies with Amedeo Baldovino on the violoncello.⁴ Grillo graduated from the Conservatory of Music “F. Morlacchi” in Perugia *summa cum laude* with a degree in double bass performance in 1970.⁵ In Grillo’s autobiography, he identifies himself as a “self-taught composer,” but he was also mentored by Valentino Bucchi, who was head of the “F. Morlacchi” Conservatory of Music during his studies.⁶

He won several prizes early in his career, most notably first prize at the Gaudeamus competition for musical interpretation of contemporary music in 1975 and the Kranichsteiner

¹ Peter Niklas Wilson, “Music from the Underground,” *Double Bassist* 22 (Autumn 2002): 17. According to Wilson, Grillo would patiently practice chord scales on the guitar for hours so that he could master every point on the entire fingerboard.

² Ibid. Lucio Buccarella is known as the editor for the International Music Company edition of the *Concerto No. 2 in B minor* by Giovanni Bottesini. Wilson does not include the name of the person who suggested playing the double bass to Grillo.

³ Fernando Grillo, [Autobiography], (Roma: Elettromograf, 1981), 1.

⁴ Wilson, “Music from the Underground,” 19. Grillo was dissatisfied with the current available transcriptions of the J. S. Bach Violoncello Suites.

⁵ Grillo, [Autobiography], 1.

⁶ “Fernando Grillo (1946–2013),” *The Strad*, August 6, 2013, 12.

Musikpreis in 1976 at the Internationale Darmstädter Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt, Germany.⁷ This prize both helped launch his career and allowed him to connect with many contemporary composers during his summers in Darmstadt, Germany for new music summits.⁸ Grillo also received an honorable mention in 1983 at the Premio "Valentino Bucchi" composition competition in Rome.⁹ A testament to his pride in these accomplishments, these prizes are listed both in his autobiography (1981) and in the Schott publication of *Suite I*.

According to German bassist and musicologist Peter Niklas Wilson, Grillo pursued a second course of avant-garde study on the double bass simultaneously with his more traditional training, allowing him to re-imagine the role of the double bass for a modern context. During this time, he began researching the infinite possibilities of sound that the double bass is capable of producing.¹⁰ His “highly disciplined research programme” was later to be labeled by Grillo as *ricerca fondamentale*.¹¹ In Grillo’s view, compositional procedures such as serialism and twelve-tone technique were too rigid and not explanatory enough for the micro-dynamics and other compositional parameters that he was trying to explain through notation. The seminars in Darmstadt led him to develop and reaffirm strong opinions about notation through contact with composers versed in serialism and other compositional techniques. As Wilson states repeatedly, this research program was clandestine and private with no connection to the European new music scene.¹² There appears to be conflicting information with the fact that Grillo’s research was

⁷ Grillo, [Autobiography], 2.

⁸ Wilson, “Music from the Underground,” 19.

⁹ Fernando Grillo, *Suite I per contrabbasso (1983/2005)* (Mainz: Schott, 2005).

¹⁰ Wilson, “Music from the Underground,” 17.

¹¹ Wilson, “Music from the Underground,” 17. This research was secretive and solitary according to Wilson. Maybe Grillo wanted to experiment freely without the scrutiny of musical criticism.

¹² Ibid, 17–18. It is worth noting that this research was labeled by Grillo as “top secret” and this has been a reoccurring trope with other instances of Grillo restricting access to his materials. For instance, Mark Cauvin in a Talk Bass post stated that Grillo had demonstrated to Cauvin in a lesson how *Theraps*

unnoticed by contemporary composers, yet he insisted on the secrecy of his program. Consequently, he created his own notational system geared towards more integrated musical parameters such as dynamics and articulation. This notational system also included graphic symbols developed by Grillo for both existing performance indications and extended techniques. I believe that the goal of this research ultimately was to find a voice unique to the double bass outside the realm of its traditional role as a foundational instrument for harmony or transcribing repertoire originally written for other instruments. What Grillo was trying to articulate was stated more succinctly later in the 1980s by Stefano Scodanibbio, who explained that he wanted “to allow the contrabass to sing with its own voice.”¹³ This begs the question: what is, in fact, unique and idiomatic to the double bass? I would argue that the physical characteristics of the double bass include increased string length in comparison to other string family members creating an advantage of allowing it to more easily access harmonics at all registers of the instrument. The copious employment of harmonics and open strings is a central compositional focus of *Suite I*.

Double bassists frequently transcribe and adapt movements of the J. S. Bach violoncello suites for the instrument. Grillo’s *Suite I* was modelled after a Baroque dance suite, but in this case, for an instrument tuned in fourths.¹⁴ A more well-known piece modelled in a similar way is the Hans Fryba *Suite in the Olden Style* (1954).¹⁵ Fryba’s Suite is a much smaller scale work than Grillo’s *Suite I*, and, unlike *Suite I*, it utilizes a more consistent traditional tonal language without

by Iannis Xenakis should be played but this explanation is private. This information was retrieved on December 24, 2019 at <https://www.talkbass.com/threads/rip-fernando-grillo.1001729/page-3>.

¹³ Håkon Thelin, “A Folk Music for the Double Bass,” accessed December 17, 2019, <http://haakonthelein.com/multiphonics/uploads/files/5%20Folk/A%20Folk%20Music%20for%20the%20Double%20Bass.pdf>. This article cites the program notes to Stefano Scodanibbio’s album *Geografia amorosa* (Col-legno, 2000) translated by Steven Lindberg.

¹⁴ Wilson, “Music from the Underground,” 19.

¹⁵ Hans Fryba, *Suite in the Olden Style: In Six Movements for Contrabass*, ed. Josef Weinberger (London: Weinberger, 1954).

employing extended techniques or excessive chromaticism. It has been established in the central canon of double bass repertoire and is frequently required for international solo competitions.¹⁶ A performance of the Fryba suite lasts under twenty minutes whereas a performance of *Suite I* can be either forty-three minutes without repeats or sixty-five minutes with repeats.¹⁷ I suspect that based on the success that the Fryba suite experienced, Grillo thought he could influence a larger group of double bassists by composing a piece modeled after a Baroque dance suite.

Grillo was heavily active as a performer, teacher, and composer during his career. He frequently composed solo works, chamber music, and even music for the theater involving spoken dialogue. He also re-worked his pieces for different instrumentation.¹⁸ He performed as both a double bassist and a cellist—presenting his own compositions on numerous occasions.¹⁹ He played professionally as a chamber musician and was very involved in his string quintet *Pythagoras Strings*, of which he was a founding member in 1999.²⁰ As an influential member of *Pythagoras Strings*, he frequently arranged and composed original music for the ensemble to perform.²¹ Grillo held full-time teaching positions at the State University Conservatories in Perugia and Pesaro, and later at the St. Cecilia Conservatory in Rome. At the time of his death on

¹⁶ See, for example, the program for the “65th ARD International Music Competition Munich 2016,” Internationaler Musikwettbewerb der ARD, ed. Elisabeth Kozik, accessed December 31, 2019, http://www.agro.cmu.ac.th/news_photo/administrator/modules/mod_news/myfile/1048_brochure-2016-download-100.pdf.

¹⁷ Grillo, *Suite I*.

¹⁸ Grillo, [Autobiography], 3–4. *Lideison* (1976) is an example of a piece adapted later for a different instrumentation.

¹⁹ Andrea Porcu and Jessica Porcu, “Fernando Grillo: Interpreter and Composer,” List of Works, last modified 2013, accessed December 29, 2019 on the Wayback Machine Internet Archive, <https://web.archive.org/web/20131108074227/http://www.fernandogrillo.it/list-of-works>.

²⁰ Fernando Grillo, “Fernando Grillo: Interpreter and Composer,” [Personal Website], List of Works, last modified September 22, 2004, accessed January 2, 2020 on the Wayback Machine Internet Archive, <https://web.archive.org/web/20060622101837/http://www.fernandogrillo.net/nuke/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=19>.

²¹ Ibid.

July 23, 2013, he held the position of double bass department head at the St. Cecilia Conservatory in Rome.

Chapter 2: BUILDING A LEGACY

Fernando Grillo was concerned about his reputation as an influential composer and double bassist. The available sources indicate that *Suite I* may have acted as a vehicle to promote his legacy. As Peter Niklas Wilson explains, “Grillo believe[d] that it might, in the long run, do more to change double bass playing than his avant-garde pieces have done — possibly because it leaves traditionally-minded teachers and players no excuse to bypass it as ‘too far out.’”¹ Grillo composed *Suite I* for several reasons; the first, includes creating a composition to draw in more conservative-minded bassists who would prefer to adhere to a tonal language. Second, he used *Suite I* as a pedagogical tool. Rather than using a transcription of a J. S. Bach Cello Suite or the less demanding Hans Fryba *Suite in the Olden Style*, he assigned his students *Suite I* as a means of teaching them about his style of notating a large spectrum of idiomatic capabilities on the double bass. Last, following his untimely death, *Suite I* has gone on to serve as a form of teaching legacy—a pedagogical tool for performers who have not had (and will never have) the opportunity to study with him. Based on the repertoire choices of his former students, it appears that Grillo may have composed *Suite I* to be used in combination with other specific compositions as part of a repertoire-based curriculum.² In his 1981 autobiography, he also lists a few works in progress without including specific dates, one of which is titled *Trattato per il contrabbasso* (or, in English, *Treatise for the Double Bass*).³ This didactic work—perhaps a

¹ Peter Niklas Wilson, “Music from the Underground,” *Double Bassist* 22 (Autumn 2002): 19. Wilson is the author of the only article on Grillo. He conducted an interview into Grillo’s accomplishments and future goals for his career in double bass.

² Grillo’s repertoire curriculum can be conjectured by examining similarities between his recital repertoire found on his personal website and repertoire performed by former students Mark Cauvin and Mario D’Amato. The repertoire list includes works by Zbinden, Scelsi, Xenakis, Dubrovay, and Grillo’s compositions such as *Paperoles*, *Soror Mystica*, and *Suite I*.

³ Fernando Grillo, [Autobiography], (Roma: Elettronograf, 1981), 7.

method book that would assist in his teaching—was to be dedicated to Grillo’s own double bass teacher Corrado Penta.⁴ At the time of his autobiography in 1981, however, it must have only been a vague plan because the dates of composition for his *Trattato per il contrabbasso* were later updated on his personal website as being 1990–present.⁵

Grillo began composing *Suite I* shortly after the publication of his autobiography. Wilson states that “the first suite could well be regarded as a bass method, since every fingering, bow placement, and bow speed are precisely notated. . . . The suite is like a preparatory course for a contemporary concept of playing this instrument.”⁶ The published score includes seventeen pages of descriptions for the various parameters that a performer will encounter in the piece written in Italian, English, and German. Several of his former students—including Enrico Francioni, Mark Cauvin, and Mario D’Amato—have made recordings of their performances of *Suite I*.⁷ Grillo seems to have assigned this work in conjunction with other repertoire, such as *Hommage à J. S. Bach op. 44* by Julien-François Zbinden, *KO - THA* by Giacinto Scelsi, *Theraps* by Iannis Xenakis, and Grillo’s own *Paperoles*, as a carefully crafted repertorial curriculum for his students.

⁴ Andrea Porcu and Jessica Porcu, “Fernando Grillo: Interpreter and Composer,” List of Works, last modified 2013, accessed December 29, 2019 on the Wayback Machine Internet Archive, <https://web.archive.org/web/20131108074227/http://www.fernandogrillo.it/list-of-works>.

⁵ Fernando Grillo, “Fernando Grillo: Interpreter and Composer,” [Personal Website], List of Works, last modified September 22, 2004, accessed January 2, 2020 on the Wayback Machine Internet Archive, <https://web.archive.org/web/20060622101837/http://www.fernandogrillo.net/nuke/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=19>.

⁶ Wilson, “Music from the Underground,” 19.

⁷ See Mark Cauvin, *Transfiguration*, Cauvin performs on double bass, recorded in 2007–2008, Head Gap Studios, Melbourne, 2008, CD; Enrico Francioni, *Tribute to Fernando Grillo*, Francioni performs on double bass, recorded 2019, eStudio and Pinkhouse Lab, [2020], online digital recording accessed January 10, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOnWzfjFeEPZ_tt5E2_neaw; Mario D’Amato, [personal website], accessed December 19, 2020, last modified 2016, <http://www.mariodamato.net/gallery/audio/>.

Grillo appears to have been very active in online forums, particularly in the summer months when he had fewer teaching obligations. In a 2008 post on the bass forum Contrabbasso Italiano, for example, Grillo cited several positive reviews from double bassists to whom he had sent the score of *Suite I* along with recordings.⁸ This may have been an attempt by Grillo to gain respect and acknowledgment as a composer making significant contributions to the musical repertoire of the double bass. *Suite I* presently is rarely performed, but many people may have heard of the work thanks, in large part, to the high profile of its music publisher Schott.

Controlling the narrative of his legacy and promoting positive reviews seem to have been common for Grillo. This is demonstrated by his frequent posts on Contrabbasso Italiano, as well as the content and tone of his 1981 autobiography. Within this text, Grillo devotes thirty-five of the book's fifty-two pages to reproducing positive reviews of musicians saying laudatory things about him as a double bassist and composer. Furthermore, in 2006, there was a discussion among editors on Wikipedia regarding an unusual edit made to the "Double Bass" entry.⁹ In this case, someone anonymously inserted Grillo's name before those of Gary Karr and Bertram Turetzky in a list of important double bassists.¹⁰ This may have been done by Grillo himself or by one of his students. Regardless, either Grillo or someone else was trying to promote and lend weight to his legacy as a double bassist.

⁸ Fernando Grillo, "Fernando Grillo - Suite I (1983/2005)," post on Contrabbasso italiano - I forum di musicherie, moderated by Vito Liuzzi, accessed December 23, 2019, last modified July 8, 2008, <http://www.contrabbassoitaliano.it/cgi-bin/forum/YaBB.cgi?num=1214997218>. Double Bassists that he sent the score to include Gary Karr, Wolfgang Teubner, Anthony Stoops, Barre Phillips, Irena Olkiewicz, Karol Kowal, Mark Cauvin, Robert Black, Peter Niklas Wilson, Stefano Sciascia, and Vito Liuzzi.

⁹ "Talk:Double bass," Wikipedia, accessed on December 28, 2019, last modified November 15, 2006, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk%3ADouble_bass#Fernando_Grillo. This link involves a discussion among editors for Wikipedia regarding the page on "Double Bass" and how someone keeps inserting Fernando Grillo as being of equal importance to Gary Karr and Bertram Turetzky.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Grillo's concern for his reputation also became clear in the way he reacted when he felt his musical pedigree was being challenged. In the mid to late 1970s, he briefly taught Stefano Scodanibbio, and allegedly, during a summer performance seminar, Scodanibbio learned Grillo's *Paperoles* with a different and apparently better interpretation than that of his teacher.¹¹ Scodanibbio presented his interpretation to Grillo, and Grillo swiftly removed him from the double bass class that summer.¹² Scodanibbio was nonetheless inspired by his teacher and maintained Grillo's notational style in his early composition *e/statico* in 1980.¹³ It may be that Scodanibbio's potential as a formidable musician intimidated Grillo, and Grillo's reaction was to expel him from the seminar. In the end, Grillo's concerns were not unfounded as his legacy has been overshadowed by that of Scodanibbio in both performance and composition.

Grillo's motivation for writing and publishing an autobiography in 1981 is not entirely clear. One possibility is that he wrote it in response to his fallout with Scodanibbio. Another explanation is that he wrote it for recruitment purposes. Since this was long before the widespread availability of the Internet, a text like this would have provided potential students with a succinct summary of Grillo's accomplishments and goals as a performer, teacher, and composer.¹⁴ In contrast, a review of *Paperoles* written in 1979 by Bertram Turetzky, which is more critical in tone, is noticeably absent from the book. The review reads in full:

¹¹ Håkon Thelin, Liner notes to *A Stefano Scodanibbio*, performed by Håkon Thelin on double bass, Atterklang 2014, CD. Liner notes accessed online December 21, 2019 https://issuu.com/haakonthelein/docs/aklang309_booklet. Håkon Thelin is an authority on the late double bassist Stefano Scodanibbio and according to an interview with Scodanibbio, his interpretation of *Paperoles* (1974) by Fernando Grillo was allegedly better than that of the composer himself.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Fernando Grillo, [Autobiography], (Roma: Elettronograf, 1981), 1–52. The autobiography includes very little biographical information. Rather, in addition to laudatory comments and articles, it also provides information on Grillo's prizes, a list of his compositions, and the recital repertoire he had mastered.

Fernando Grillo's *Paperoles* (1977), a short unaccompanied work, may be totally unaccompanied (i.e., without the performer) due to the way in which it has been notated. Grillo, as a performer, should know that a notation which preserves a work for a composer must be translated for the "rest of the world," especially when extended techniques are the norm. The composer is clearly out of touch with some of the recent developments in notation after the 1974 Ghent Conference and overloads the piece with symbols that either are not universal or take the place of already-established and well functioning notational practice. The explanation of the symbols was badly translated (does your bow have a neel?) and obviously does not proofread. A detailed study of this score convinces me that the notational system (notation functions as a purveyor of information from composer to performer in through-composed works) annoys, confuses, and ultimately will put off serious potential performers. Having wrestled with the problem of notation of extended techniques from both sides now, it is clear to me that efficiency, clarity, and accuracy, should be the goal. It is unfortunate that Grillo's first publication to reach America should be sand-bagged with such problems. If he is committed to this approach then a tape or demonstration record of the sounds of the various techniques might be included to reinforce the printed explanation of the symbols. Several composers I have worked with have been discussing this possibility, and in this case, it would certainly have been a boon.¹⁵

Turetzky's review presents valid criticism of both Grillo's notational system and quality of English translations provided in the score. It is not clear if Grillo knew of this review prior to publishing his autobiography, but regardless, it is omitted both from his 1981 autobiography and from any subsequent postings on the Internet. As I will demonstrate, the issues that Turetzsky identified in *Paperoles* were certainly improved in the more recent Schott publication of *Suite I*, but not all the problems were resolved.¹⁶ Turetzky's critical review articulates valid reasons for the lack of public attention to Grillo as a composer. In particular, he succinctly suggests that if Grillo is committed to this notational system, he should create an audio or video demonstration that clearly explicates the method behind his musical intentions.

¹⁵ Bertram Turetzky, "Reviewed Works: *Paperoles, per contrabbasso* by Fernando Grillo," *Notes*, Second Series 35, No. 4 (1979), 984–986.

¹⁶ See Chapter 4 for more on this.

With the emergence of the Internet, online double bass forums such as TalkBass and Contrabbasso Italiano have allowed double bassists to connect globally. I believe Grillo used these forums to advance his legacy on several occasions.¹⁷ For example, he frequently promoted *Suite I* as an online commenter, as in this self-aggrandizing post published on Contrabbasso Italiano from July 2, 2008:

“Suite I for double bass is a historic event that revolutionizes the musical basics for string instrument playing, with the new and unusual aspects that it contributes to music discipline and practices. The interpreter, after the first visual impact: the approach to the sheet of music - forewarned the initiatory character to the sound that permeates all the work - and the apparent disorientation it can cause, will be inevitably urged to understand the sound events by means of their scrupulous analysis and execution. The work reveals, like an open book, the need to reach a high level of musical refinement that is based on the physical-positive truth of the sound parameters perception. The horizontal and vertical architecture of the composition is clearly expressed visually by the thorough positioning of useful graphical signs and in the perception by the sound produced. The main inspiration of the composition can be traced back to the proportions - manifested in “nature”- of the Pythagorean monochord: the fundamental of the 1st harmonic from which the harmonic sounds of the numerical series are enucleated. This tension of grave to high, so wonderfully representative on the double bass, convinced me to elaborate a music that places the attack (first in the sound production), timbre (relevant because it has never been heard before), length (defined by the articulation sign that allows the string, in a natural way, to be “let to vibrate”) and the dynamic (suggestive “milieu” of the interpretative psyche) to preside over the perception of sound and no longer the height of sound, like the improbable attempt to “imitate” the violin. In particular, I would like to underline the new concepts introduced by Suite I in relation to the sound parameters: attack, length, pitch, dynamics and timbre, to the bowing for the execution of the graduated articulation signs by lifting and adhering the bow to the string, to the use of harmonic sounds in their timbre peculiarity, to the scrupulous tablature of the pitch of the sound, that, assuming a correct and natural position of the hand according to the physiology of the articulation, allow an intonation based on expressive procedures and, last but not least, to the innovative musical graphic for symbols and notations, produced by myself, that sustain “intelligent” reading. These aspects are continuously present in the

¹⁷ Fernando Grillo, “Fernando Grillo - Suite I (1983/2005),” post on Contrabbasso italiano - I forum di musicherie, moderated by Vito Liuzzi, accessed December 23, 2019, last modified July 8, 2008, <http://www.contrabbassoitaliano.it/cgi-bin/forum/YaBB.cgi?num=1214997218>. Contrabbasso Italiano is an online double bass forum where people discuss various double bass topics in Italian. It is analogous to Talk Bass which is in English. This forum was founded and is moderated by Vito Liuzzi.

composition, which, although founded on traditional structures, in particular baroque music, not infrequently extends to sounds that have never been heard before.

Indeed, due to the “continuum” of musical invention, one discovers new and unexplored possibilities for the instrument and a sense of extreme naturalness is reawakened in the listener: every event constitutes a profound moment of reflection for the scholar. The transmission of thought, accomplished by the writing, the simple executive appropriation through a “natural” production of the sound, have allowed me the extraordinary opportunity to provoke a “reawakening” of the desire for knowledge that makes the potentiality for research inexhaustible. Finally, in Suite I thought and sound become a reality, while awaiting new developments in musical practices. I would like to express, now, with Leonardo, what animates my sound studies and my passions: “And drawn by my yearning desire, I wander to see the great mingling of the various and strange forms made by artful nature ... my back bent in a bow, ... immediately two things awake in me, fear and desire: fear of my dark menacing den, desire to see if several miraculous things enter it ... Fernando Grillo”¹⁸

In this post, Grillo is aligning himself with monumental figures of Western music such as Pythagoras and J. S. Bach. He cited the contributions that they made in the musical sphere and discussed how he was inspired by their work and applied their traditions to the double bass. Pythagoras inspired Grillo in terms of discovering the harmonic possibilities of the double bass and J. S. Bach inspired him to pursue Baroque language in terms of harmony and form. Grillo wanted to demonstrate that he was rooted in these strong musical traditions of the past while forging a new path forward.

Not too long after these promotional posts on Contrabbasso Italiano, Grillo seemed to withdraw completely from the forum from about 2008 until his death in 2013. After Grillo committed suicide people began wondering what happened. Information in the United States immediately following the tragic events was limited since most of the available information came from Italian media outlets. A user named Damon Smith posted on TalkBass inquiring

¹⁸ Fernando Grillo, “Fernando Grillo - Suite I (1983/2005),” post on Contrabbasso italiano - I forum di musicherie, moderated by Vito Liuzzi, accessed December 23, 2019, last modified July 8, 2008, <http://www.contrabbassoitaliano.it/cgi-bin/forum/YaBB.cgi?num=1214997218>. This post is copied verbatim from the source and contains misspellings and other errors in Grillo’s English translation.

about the cause of Grillo's death shortly after he died.¹⁹ Vito Liuzzi (founder and moderator for Contrabbasso Italiano) later commented to provide some clarity on Grillo's suicide:²⁰

Dear friends,

first of all I'm sorry for my no correct English. Well, maestro Fernando Grillo had died and it has been a suicide. Why? Sure no economic problems! He lived in a beautiful house in the centre of Perugia (Italy) and he taught in Santa Cecilia Conservatory of Music in Rome. Some months ago I received from him his SUITE I for Solo double bass, an incredible composition that I suggest you (it's very and very difficult). I can say my opinion but I don't know if it's the truth. Probably maestro Grillo was living a very difficult period with his depression. Why? You must know that in all countries Grillo was considered the "Buddha of the double bass" but NOT in Italy. "Nemo propheta in patria est"! So, probably he suffered from this point of view and sometimes I think this fact was also an his fault. Grillo was strange, very strange especially in the relationships with his colleagues. In Italy we have Franco Petracchi, Alberto Bocini, Giuseppe Ettore, Stefano Sciascia, the great (and lost) Stefano Scodanibbio and so on but who was Grillo? In Italy the great Maestro was no considered for his great skills of composer and doublebass player. In my opinion this might be the truth ... but I'm not a God in earth.

Thank you to all for remembering one of the greatest double bass player of every time.

Regards.

Vito²¹

Liuzzi explains that he believed Grillo was an important double bassist, but the Italian musical community did not recognize his value. He cites Grillo's strange behavior as a possible reason for this lack of recognition. On July 24, 2013, Liuzzi had also posted a tribute to Grillo on his

¹⁹ Damon Smith, "RIP Fernando Grillo?," *TalkBass-BassistsDB*, moderated by Chris Fitzgerald, accessed December 24, 2019, last modified December 7, 2017, <https://www.talkbass.com/threads/rip-fernando-grillo.1001729/>. Damon Smith posted about wanting to know how Fernando Grillo died and if there were any other details. He mentioned that most of the news articles were in Italian so he wanted clarity regarding the situation.

²⁰ Ibid. Vito Liuzzi responded on August 2, 2013 clarifying that Grillo died by suicide and gave some opinions on why Grillo might have taken his own life and what his state of mind might have been. Earlier people commented that economic hardships in Italy may have contributed to his death and Vito refutes those claims.

²¹ Ibid. This is the verbatim response by Vito Liuzzi in response to Damon Smith's post about Grillo's death. Liuzzi is not a native English speaker and I retained the original post with errors that were made in the post.

own blog about Grillo's death and mentioned that Grillo often offended members of the forum and denigrated them.²²

About a year before Grillo's death, in March 2012, a YouTube page was created in his name.²³ Later that September, a Vimeo page was also created in his name.²⁴ Two possible theories might suggest why this occurred. The first is that Grillo was making a final attempt to reach a wider audience to gain recognition within the double bass community. The videos available on the channel demonstrate his aptitude for composition, his technical mastery of the instrument, and some of his collaborative musical activities. This theory also fits with his past behavior of striving to promote his accomplishments. Another possibility could be that friends and/or former students of Grillo made the pages in his name in order to honor his legacy. This latter theory seems to be the more likely of the two for a few reasons. Some evidence for this theory can be found in the website that his friends Andrea and Jessica Porcu made in his honor. This website contains so much content that it is unlikely that Grillo's friends were able to construct the website in a short amount of time.²⁵ It is probable that they had been planning to launch this website before his sudden death.²⁶

²² Vito Liuzzi, "FERNANDO GRILLO morto suicida (23/07/'13)," *The Double Bass Blog - "il Contrabbasso"* (blog), July 24, 2013, accessed on 12/27/19, <http://liuzzivito.blogspot.com/2013/07/fernando-grillo-morto-suicida-230713.html>. Grillo could be adversarial towards other commenters on Contrabbasso Italiano. In one specific case, he sarcastically responds to someone that misspells the title of a piece by Hans Fryba.

²³ "Fernando Grillo," YouTube, accessed March 24, 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/user/FernandoGrilloMusic/featured>. This YouTube page contains several videos of performances with the *Pythagoras String Quintet*, solo recitals, and appearances on RAI television. The last video on this page was uploaded on Jun 13, 2012.

²⁴ "Fernando Grillo," Vimeo, accessed March 24, 2018, <https://vimeo.com/user13176668>. There are only two videos on the page that were both uploaded on September 5, 2012. It is possible that this is because of Vimeo's time limits on videos.

²⁵ fernandogrillo.it was launched on July 26, 2013. Three days is a quick turnaround to unveil such an expansive database of Grillo's life.

²⁶ Andrea Porcu and Jessica Porcu, "Fernando Grillo: Interpreter and Composer," last modified 2013, accessed December 29, 2019 on the Wayback Machine Internet Archive,

Another piece of evidence involves a consistent error found on both the website and the Vimeo page. It lists the date of composition of *Itesi* as 1972/1974 and *Arcana* as 1988. This information is consistently presented throughout the entire website in reproductions of concert programs and composition lists.²⁷ In the autobiography, the dates of composition for *Itesi* are 1972/1978.²⁸ To complicate matters even further, according to the self-published autograph score of *Itesi* the dates listed on the score are 1973/April 1978 and are written in Grillo's own pen.²⁹ There may be some confusion when the composition first began (1972 or 1973) but the final edition was probably completed in April 1978. Both Grillo's personal website and Wilson's article also affirm that the dates of composition for *Itesi* were 1972/1978, and *Arcana* is listed as being written in 1989.³⁰³¹ Based on these consistent errors, it is probable that the YouTube and Vimeo pages under Grillo's name were created by someone other than Grillo himself.³² In conclusion, Grillo's friends were likely concerned about him, and it is possible they continued to promote his legacy after he withdrew from the musical world.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20131108074227/http://www.fernandogrillo.it>. This website, which is no longer active, contains a large amount of information on Grillo's activities.

²⁷ The website containing the error was from fernandogrillo.it which was created by Grillo's friends and not his own personal website which was fernandogrillo.net.

²⁸ Grillo, [Autobiography], 3.

²⁹ Fernando Grillo, *Itesi per contrabbasso solo (1973–aprile 1978)* (Milan: printed by the author, 1977). This is a self-published reproduction of the autograph fair copy score by Grillo held at the Hochschule der Künste Bern Musikbibliothek in Switzerland.

³⁰ Wilson, "Music from the Underground," 19.

³¹ Grillo, [Autobiography], 3.

³² Grillo was very detail oriented and his compositional dates were consistent on his personal website (fernandogrillo.net) and in his 1981 autobiography.

Chapter Three: NOTATIONAL SYSTEM IN *SUITE I*

Grillo developed a system of notation to suit his needs as a composer and to leave nothing unexplained for the performer. He wanted to specify nuance that the existing notational system was unable to accommodate. He used an array of symbols to indicate extended techniques and gradations of existing symbols, particularly in dynamics and articulation. Several symbols to explain extended techniques in compositions such as *Paperoles* and *Etolie* will require further study and are outside the scope of this paper. Fewer extended techniques are required to perform *Suite I*, which will be the notational focus here.¹

Development of New Symbols for Older Techniques

Digesting a score by Grillo can be cumbersome because there are instances where he creates a symbol for a performance parameter that already has symbol or method that is more commonly used. This section can be divided into two: 1) symbols that replace an existing symbol or method and 2) symbols that are created to expand existing symbols.

1. New Symbols that Replace Existing Symbols

Grillo had his own system of notating left-hand pizzicati, fingering extensions and pivots, tablature harmonics, and glissandi. First, it is important to discuss Grillo's symbol for left-hand pizzicato: a dot placed to the left side of a line. That line represents the string and the placement of the dot on left side indicates that the left-hand should pluck the string. He elaborates on this symbol by indicating the specific digit to be used in plucking. Typically, a left-hand pizzicato is indicated by using an addition sign (+). Since left-hand pizzicati typically apply to open strings, it should usually be clear which string to pluck in those circumstances. It is less clear if the

¹ Please refer to Appendix A for a full chart of the notational symbols discussed in this chapter.

performer needs to play harp harmonics with the left hand.² Even though the established symbol for left-hand pizzicati is an addition sign (+) this can cause further confusion because that same symbol is used for the thumb when notating it as a fingering. Grillo likely created this symbol because in earlier scores such as *Paperoles*, he places the dot on the right side of the line when he indicates that the pizzicato should be performed by the right-hand.³ Example 3.1 contains of all the possibilities of left-hand pizzicato.

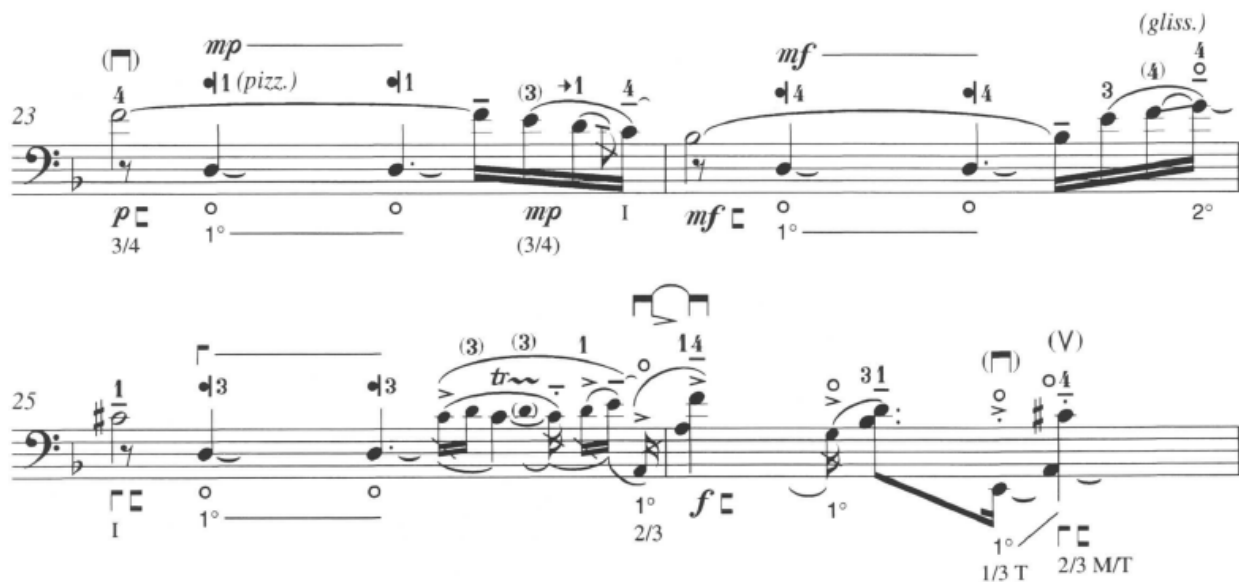


Example 3.1. Fernando Grillo, *Suite I*, instructions, page 9

Grillo utilizes left-hand pizzicato in two ways throughout *Suite I*. The first happens when the pizzicato happens simultaneously with the bow sounding another pitch. Grillo has the performer pluck the open D string to create a duet with the upper line that is bowed. Example 3.2 illustrates this application of left-hand pizzicati. In this excerpt, the opening melody is varied while incorporating this technique.

² These are realized when the left thumb touches the natural harmonic of a string while it is simultaneously plucked by a different finger on the left hand.

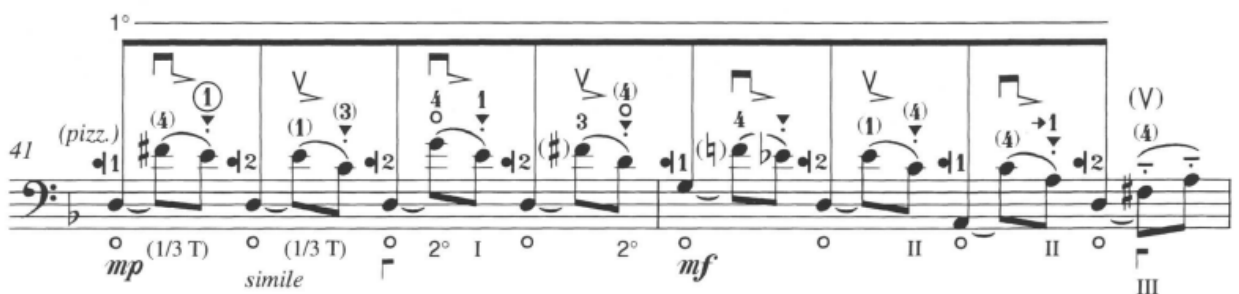
³ Fernando Grillo, *Paperoles* (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 1977).



Example 3.2. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement IV, mm. 23–26

The second way in which Grillo uses left-hand pizzicati can be found in faster passages where it is more pragmatic for the left hand to pluck the note so that the bow can remain on the string.

Example 3.3 illustrates this performance situation.



Example 3.3. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement VI, mm. 41–42

Grillo also wanted to be able to explain fingering extensions and pivots of the left hand with a graphic symbol. A fingering extension or pivot achieve the same goal which is to augment the

conventional hand position for the left hand on the double bass. For instance, if the first and second finger were to cover the range of a whole step or the first and fourth finger were to cover a minor third by maintaining the same thumb contact and not shifting, they both would be considered extensions because they augment the conventional range of the fingers. Grillo uses a one directional arrow to explain a pivot and a two directional arrow to explain an extension. The two symbols in Example 3.4 are for pivots and extensions, respectively. A pivot or extension requires a small shift, and shifts are typically notated with horizontal lines between pitches. A possible reason Grillo uses arrows to indicate fingering extensions is because he uses horizontal lines to denote transitions between symbols.



Example 3.4. Grillo, *Suite I*, instructions, pages 19–20

He further elaborates that extensions are applied to thumb position by stating that the natural position of the hand forms a whole step between the thumb and the first finger and a whole step between the first and third finger. This is a semi-chromatic position as codified by Franco Petracchi in his book *Simplified Higher Technique*.⁴ Grillo considers any thumb position that deviates from this hand position to be transitional and therefore to require an extension.

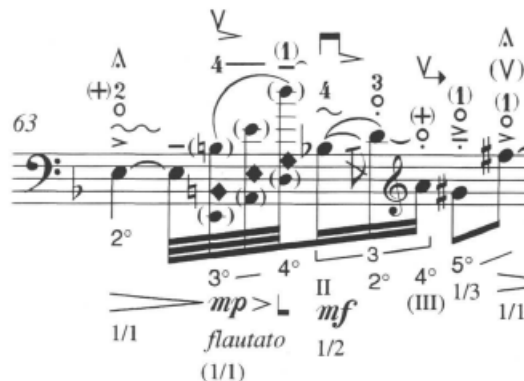
Another symbol that Grillo created relates to glissandi. Glissandi are usually notated with a diagonal line between two pitches. As displayed in Example 3.5, Grillo uses a different symbol.

⁴ Francesco Petracchi, *Simplified Higher Technique for Double Bass*, introduction by Rodney Sladford (London: York Edition, 1982), 1.



Example 3.5. Grillo, *Suite I*, instructions, page 17

Finally, Grillo had a system for notating tablature harmonics. These are instances in which the natural harmonic that is produced does not equal the sounding pitch when the string is stopped at the same point. In these instances, it is necessary to realize the harmonic through a tablature-based system. He indicates three pieces of information for tablature harmonics: 1) what string to use in playing the harmonic, 2) where to touch the string, and 3) what the sounding pitch of the harmonic will be. So, in total the performer is given three pitches for a single tablature harmonic, as shown in Example 3.6.



Example 3.6. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement I, m. 63

2. Expansion of Existing Symbols

Grillo wanted to expand the conventional ranges of articulation, dynamics, and musical pauses. *Suite I* is the only published composition by Grillo that provides articulation markings to

define the exact length of the ends of notes. Modelled on the music of J. S. Bach, Grillo conducted research into how an instrument tuned in fourths should approach articulation, and *Suite I* is the product of this research.⁵ Grillo uses five symbols for articulation; however, he does not assign any labels for these symbols. Please refer to example 3.7 for a scale of Grillo's articulation symbols from shortest to longest.



Example 3.7. Grillo, *Suite I*, instructions, page 11

Grillo includes a legend in the instructions to *Suite I* defining the lengths of notes for each articulation symbol. The three symbols in the middle can be labeled as *staccato*, *staccato/tenuto*, and *tenuto* markings. The outer symbols were created by Grillo to expand the range of existing articulation markings. The symbol on the far left in Example 3.7 is shorter than a *staccato* and can be labeled as a *staccatissimo* marking. In his legend, he defines this articulation to be between 1/16 and 1/4 the length of the indicated note value. According to Grillo, this articulation is created by starting the hair of the bow from the string and near the frog and then finishing the stroke by lifting the bow high off the string. He also includes a chart in which he illustrates that the shorter a stroke is the higher the lift of the bow needs to be after the stroke. This allows the stroke to be very short and ringy. The conventional symbol for a *staccatissimo* is a downward facing triangle like Grillo's symbol, except it does not include a dot below it. The longest articulation that Grillo includes is a symbol that is a *tenuto* marking with an additional tie placed

⁵ Peter Niklas Wilson, "Music from the Underground," *Double Bassist* 22 (Autumn 2002): 19.

on the right side. This symbol is supposed to clarify that the ending of a note needs to be very long with minimal space before the next note. He indicates that the length of this articulation should be 15/16 of the indicated note value. Past composers have also considered ways to lengthen a *tenuto* but have found different solutions. Ottorino Respighi, for instance, notated this articulation by placing a tie after a note and omitting the *tenuto* marking, as in Example 3.8.



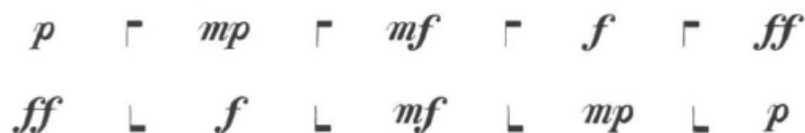
Example 3.8. Ottorino Respighi, *Fontane di Roma*, movement IV, m. 24

In addition, Grillo wanted to expand the realm of dynamics in a similar way to his articulation markings. As shown in Example 3.9, Grillo created two symbols to facilitate intermediary dynamics between conventional dynamic markings.



Example 3.9. Grillo, *Suite I*, instructions, page 20

Example 3.10 illustrates when these intermediary symbols are applied to the context of conventional dynamics.



Example 3.10. Grillo, *Suite I*, instructions, page 20

Grillo also created a symbol to indicate that a dynamic level should remain unchanged. This symbol is just a composite of the ones from Example 3.9. Please refer to Example 3.11.



Example 3.11. Grillo, *Suite I*, instructions, page 21

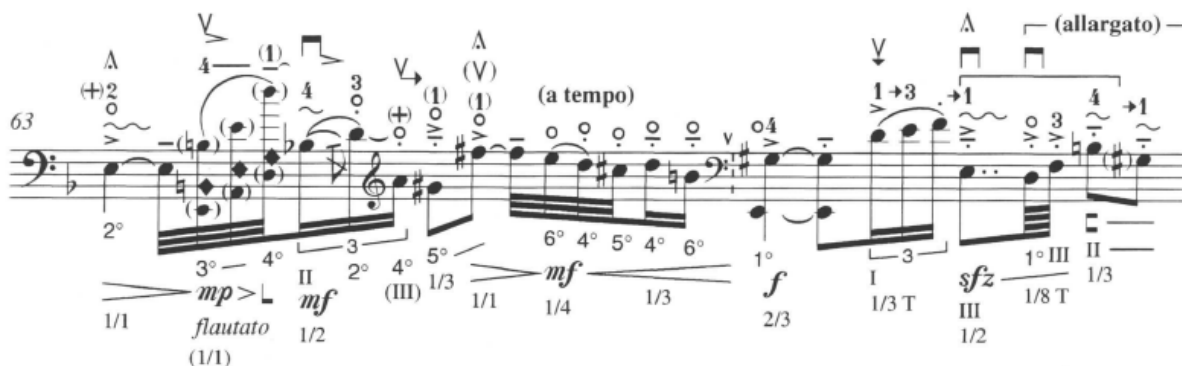
Furthermore, Grillo also expanded notational indications of musical pauses, using four different symbols. Example 3.12 presents all four pauses from shortest to longest in duration.



Example 3.12. Grillo, *Suite I*, instructions, page 15

The most important of these four symbols is the first symbol on the left in Example 3.12, which resembles an upbow. This is supposed to act as a “very short rest (caesura).”⁶ Grillo places this symbol when he wants it to precede a note that should be set up without haste or in other words starting that note from the string. This can be found in Example 3.13 between measures 63 and 64 of the Prelude.

⁶ Grillo, *Suite I per contrabbasso (1983/2005)* (Mainz: Schott, 2005), 15.



Example 3.13. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement I, mm. 63–64

Creating New Symbols to Replace Prose

The next part of this chapter will deal with graphic symbols that Grillo created to replace existing performance instructions that historically have been indicated through prose descriptions. Grillo seemed to be committed to reducing the amount of text in scores. Occurrences where Grillo uses prose include tempo indications (in boldface font), the word *simile* (denoting repetition in bowing lengths, string usage, etc.), or musical character descriptions such as *flautato* or *improvviso*. Graphic symbols that he created for performance instructions to replace text include symbols for *ponticello*, *sul tasto*, and *vibrato*.

Please refer to Example 3.14 for Grillo's symbol for bow placement instructions for *ponticello* (playing closer to the bridge).



Example 3.14. Grillo, *Suite I*, instructions, page 22

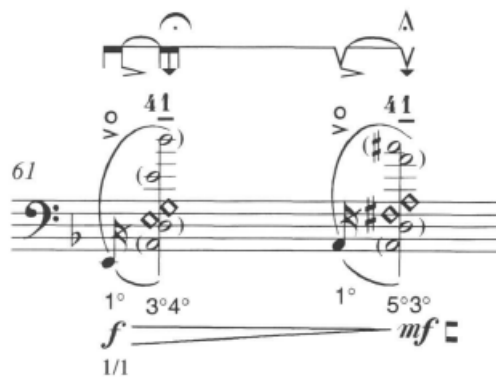
The use of two arrows pointing down instead of one instructs the performer that the *ponticello* needs to be exaggerated and positioned even closer to the bridge. Conversely, Grillo uses one or two arrows pointing up when he wants to describe *sul tasto* (bowing over the fingerboard) or an exaggerated *sul tasto*.

Please refer to Example 3.15 for Grillo's range of symbols for *sul tasto* bow placement.



Example 3.15. Grillo, *Suite I*, instructions, page 22

Example 3.16 presents Grillo's *ponticello* symbol applied in measure 61 of the Prelude.

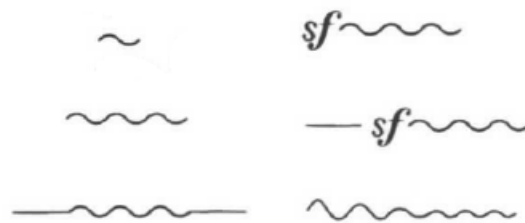


Example 3.16. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement I, m. 61

For these harmonic double stops to speak clearly, he indicates that they need to be played closer to the bridge. The preceding open E and A grace notes, however, should not be executed as close to the bridge for them to clearly sound, and there Grillo omits the *ponticello* symbol. In addition, Grillo's symbol for *ponticello* appears to have evolved over time. In *Etolie*, for example, the

ponticello symbol with two arrows pointing down instructs the performer to play on the other side of the bridge above the tailpiece rather than to play an exaggerated version of *ponticello*.⁷

The last symbol that Grillo created to replace prose is his symbol for *vibrato*. Typically, if a composer instructs a performer to use vibrato, they will use prose in the score for “vibrato” or “non-vibrato,” or V. and N.V. in shorthand (usually composers omit *vibrato* instructions altogether). In contrast to his earlier published compositions, Grillo elaborates on the amplitude variance of *vibrato* in *Suite I* and *Soror Mystica*. Monotonous and overused *vibrato* can be undesirable in performance, and *vibrato* in Baroque music is a topic of debate among historically informed performers. Grillo wanted to ensure that *vibrato* requests are clearly explained in his scores. In fact, Grillo requests *vibrato* sparingly in *Suite I*, and the amplitude for which the *vibrato* oscillates varies at times depending on the context. Example 3.17 presents Grillo’s chart for *vibrato* symbols.



Example 3.17. Grillo, *Suite I*, instructions, page 15

⁷ Fernando Grillo, *Etolie per violoncello* (Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 1976), 2.

Creation of New Symbols

Grillo created an array of symbols to explain certain phenomena or techniques that lacked existing symbols, including the lateral pulling of a string with the thumb, sympathetic string vibrations, sound *portamenti*, and compound bowing instructions.

The symbol that Grillo uses for the lateral pulling of a string with the thumb is an addition sign (+) with an arrow on the right side. This technique is an alternative to barring two notes against the fingerboard with the thumb. This is a technique that is used to get a pitch to sound on the string without having it be pressed down against the fingerboard. This technique is advantageous when two notes need to be barred with the thumb. One string can be pressed down against the fingerboard with the thumb while the adjacent string is “pulled” laterally with the tip of the thumb.⁸ One disadvantage to this technique is that the tone quality can suffer. Grillo was aware of this issue and stated, “as an alternative to this technique, the performer can press the string wherever possible.”⁹ Please refer to Example 3.18.



Example 3.18. Grillo, *Suite I*, instructions, page 17

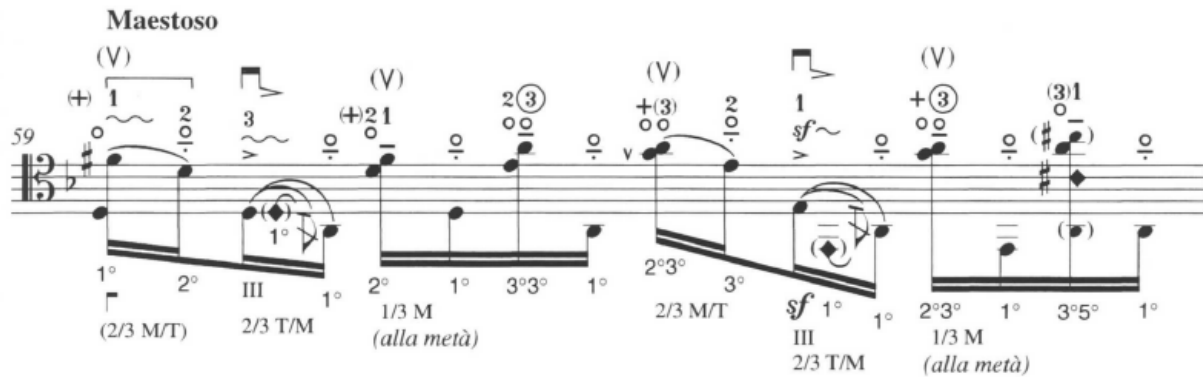
Grillo also created a notational symbol to indicate sympathetic string vibrations—a unique musical phenomenon that is important to the cultivation of sound quality in double bass performance. To my knowledge, sympathetic string vibrations are not notated in string instrument repertoire. They occur when an open string corresponds to a pitch being played on

⁸ Grillo, *Suite I*, 17.

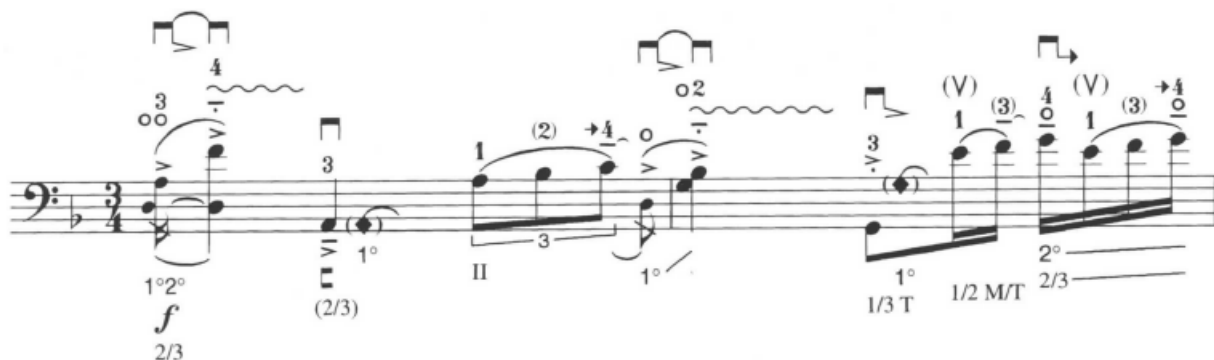
⁹ Ibid.

another string and both pitches can be related to each other relative to the overtone series.

Assuming the stopped note is played relatively in tune, the corresponding open string will sympathetically vibrate. For instance, if a double bassist is playing an E-natural on the A string, the open E string will sympathetically vibrate. To notate this phenomenon, Grillo used a filled in diamond head placed on the correct string in parentheses that should be vibrating. It is important to note that sympathetic string vibrations can happen above and below the note that is pressed down. Examples 3.19 and 3.20 illustrate Grillo's application of this notational symbol.



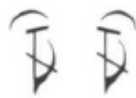
Example 3.19. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement II, m. 59



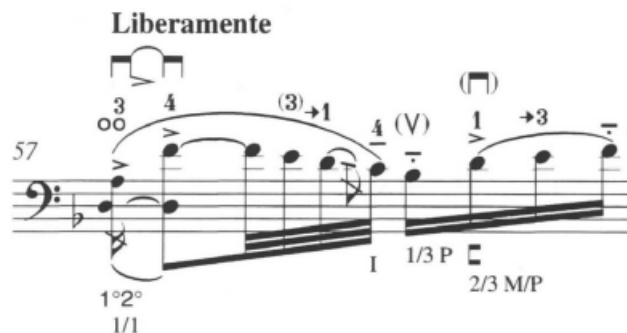
Example 3.20. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement IV, mm. 1–2

In the first measure of the Sarabande, assuming the A-natural is going to be played in tune on the E string, the open A string will sympathetically vibrate as long as the left-hand fingers are curved in a position that does not impede the vibration of the open string. When this sympathetic vibration is maximized, the stopped A-natural is in tune relative to the open string. This process of activating sympathetic string vibrations is a tenet of good intonation for double bassists. If the instrument is vibrating in a certain way, the overall sound quality is fuller and louder.

Grillo also created an extended technique that he called *portamento del suono* or sound *portamento*. This technique is produced by executing a finger substitution while shifting between two notes. He writes that this effect should be free of glissandi. Example 3.21 contains the symbols for sound *portamento* whether the pitch is rising or falling, respectively, and Example 3.22 displays the technique in context.



Example 3.21. Grillo, *Suite I*, instructions, page 17



Example 3.22. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement II, m. 57

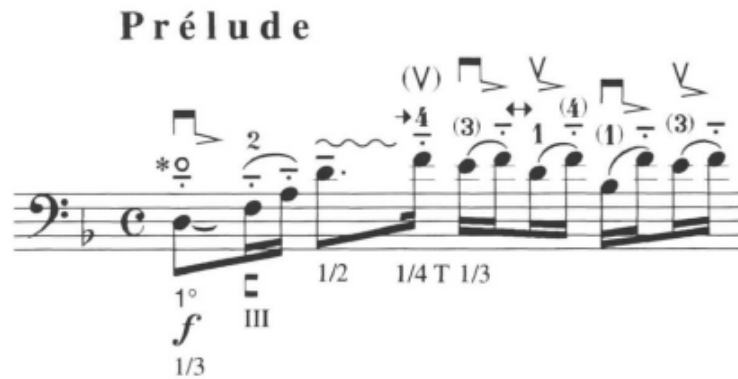
An interesting observation about this technique is that Grillo himself states that there should be no glissando; however, when observing a video of him demonstrating this technique there is often a slight glissando. The score and video in question is a recital where he performs *Soror Mystica*, and that composition frequently exploits this specific technique.¹⁰ This brings up another interesting observation that, in many instances during this performance, Grillo does not always follow his own notation for *Soror Mystica*.

The last symbol that Grillo uses for *Suite I* and *Soror Mystica* is a symbol that indicates when a note (or two notes) has a natural decay in sound. He includes a symbol for the opposite scenario in that a note or pair of notes contain an artificial crescendo. As shown in Example 3.23, Grillo regularly attaches a second symbol to a bowing, creating a composite—a common approach in Grillo’s notational style. This symbol is used mostly in the context of phrasing. For example, Grillo often includes this symbol with two-note couplets where he wants the two notes to have a slight diminuendo. Please refer to example 3.24 for this symbol used in context. There, he wants the E, D, B-flat, and E to be stronger than the adjacent F-naturals in each two-note pairing.



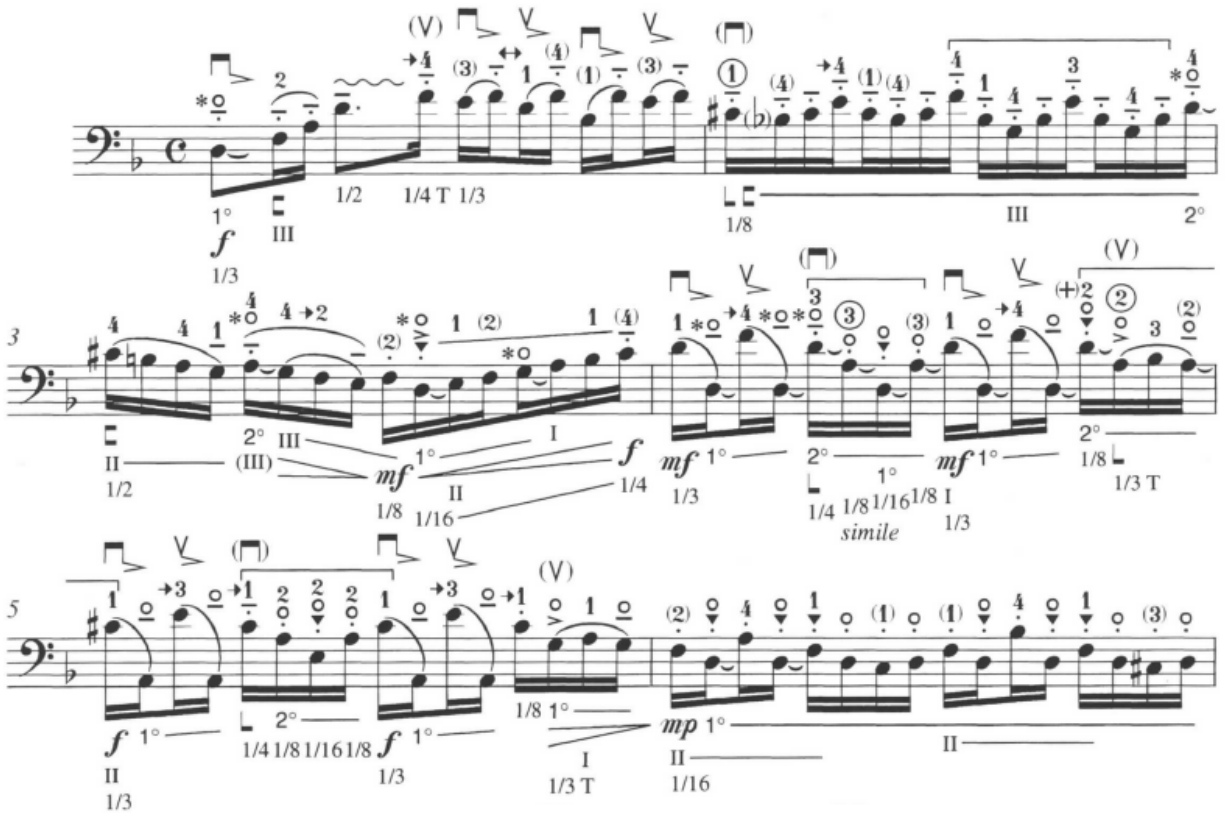
Example 3.23. Grillo, *Suite I*, instructions, page 14

¹⁰ Fernando Grillo, “Soror Mystica (1978:79) – Arcana (1988),” Vimeo, accessed on January 13, 2020, <https://vimeo.com/48889161>.



Example 3.24. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement I, m. 1

The final notational aspect that Grillo developed were symbols used to indicate bow length. He used integer fractions to divide the bow from the entire bow (1/1) down to as small as 1/16 of the bow and any fraction in between. Within the first six measures of the prelude one can see that he is indicating a bow length specification on every note or group of notes. Please refer to Example 3.25.



Example 3.25. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement I, mm. 1–6

The fractional bow lengths that he provides correspond to his articulation symbols. For example, a note with a shorter articulation is usually going to have a smaller fraction of bow usage such as $1/8$ or $1/16$. This was his pedagogical approach in explaining how to achieve a specific sound in relation to his articulation markings. His focus on sound leads him to frequently state *lasciar vibrare* (or “let vibrate”), which means that the bow should leave the string to allow a residual ring. To further elaborate on sound production, he defines the term *cavata* as an intense and stable sound with the bow adhering to the string. He occasionally places this term throughout *Suite I*. I think Grillo’s goal was to ensure that anyone performing *Suite I* could produce a good quality of sound, and he believed he could achieve this by means of his notational system.

Chapter 4: A PRAGMATIC APPROACH TO *SUITE I*

Double bassist Robert Black described *Suite I* well when he said:

The printed page contains two layers of information. The first layer is conventional: a staff, familiar pitch and rhythmic notation, time signatures, key signatures (the suite is in d minor), and dynamics. The second layer is a collection of graphic symbols that lead the performer into an extremely detailed bowing technique that explores sound parameters such as attack, length, release, articulation, bow speed, pitch, vibratos, dynamics, timbre, harmonics, and more.¹

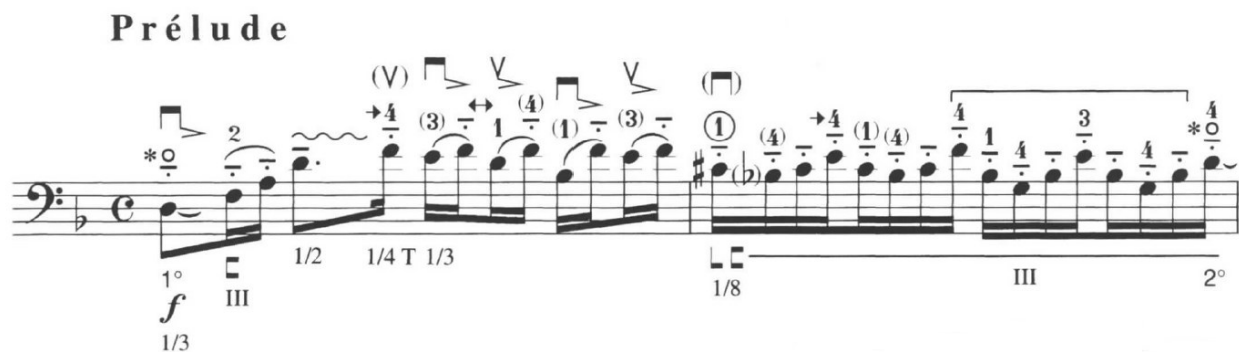
The process of learning *Suite I* is a multistep one that involves isolating specific performance parameters and then eventually combining them. It will take many cycles of adding layers to achieve all the performance parameters that Grillo has requested. The performer should first address the familiar elements of the music such as fingerings, accuracy of pitches, correct bowings, and a basic framework of dynamics and reserve the less familiar aspects of the notation for later. The target double bassist of *Suite I* includes a highly skilled performer who has a solid technical grounding and a good grasp of solo repertoire. This concept of target audience is necessary to articulate because it is assumed that the performer will possess the skills to assume certain notational requests. The goal of this chapter is to inform double bassists on what can be reduced from the score and while not harming the intentions that Grillo has set forth.

Fingerings

In general, a reductional approach to fingerings can be applied so that it does not harm the original intent of Grillo. The fingerings that are provided by Grillo are a valuable resource, but I believe there is a clearer way in which to present this information. Grillo intermittently includes brackets over groups of pitches to indicate that a hand position should remain

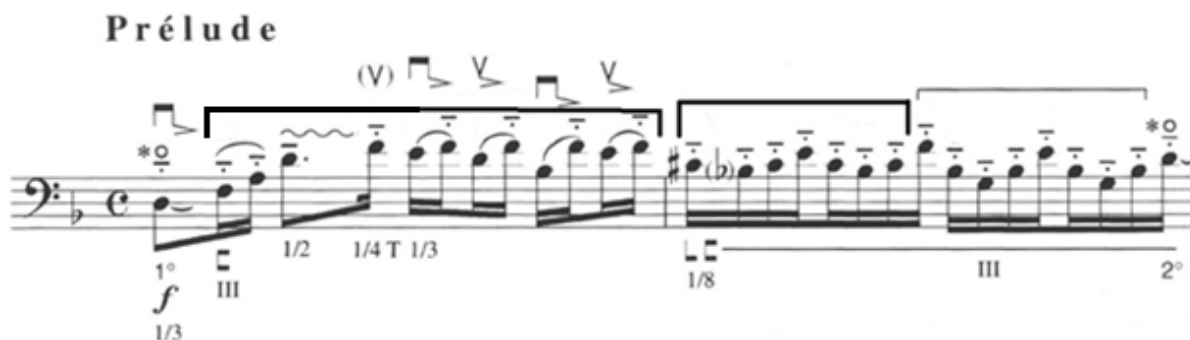
¹ Robert Black, "The Latest Score: Suite I (1983/2005) Fernando Grillo," *Bass World: The Journal of the International Society of Bassists* 30 no. 3 (February 2007): 47–48.

unchanged and this technique could be expanded throughout *Suite I*. Brackets can replace fingerings and be used in cases where an extension or pivot is needed. Moreover, a trained double bassist should understand the implied fingering when viewing bracketed notes. Please refer to Example 4.1.



Example 4.1. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement I, mm. 1–2

In measure 1 of the Prelude, a bracket could begin at the first F-natural and extend until the last F-natural. A pivot can be assumed between the D-natural and high F-natural. In the second measure, a bracket could be added beginning at the first C-sharp and lasting until the last C-sharp with a pivot being applied since the range is a minor third. Adding these two brackets could eliminate eighteen fingerings in just two measures of music. A trained double bassist would understand what needs to happen and execute these requests. Please refer to Example 4.2 for an example of this reduction and how it can have a positive, more streamlined psychological impact.



Example 4.2. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement I, mm. 1–2

Grillo's Use of the Second and Third Finger

As Grillo explains in the instructions to *Suite I*:

“Neck” fingering is indicated by the composer with a mixed technique of 2 and 3, according to the intonation of the major or minor scale degrees and the harmonic tension that one wishes to obtain. This mixed technique unites the two schools, Austrian-German and Italian, that use respectively the second and the third finger.²

The prevalence of the third finger in lower positions is a performance tradition that is associated with Italy and exploited in the *Nuovo metodo per contrabbasso* by Isaia Billè.³ The Austrian-German approach that Grillo references involves using the second finger rather than the third finger to divide a whole step evenly into two half steps. This fingering system seems to be more universal and Grillo likely wanted to incorporate this fingering in combination with his traditional studies. Grillo's simultaneous application of the second and third finger can be useful and, at the same time, cause confusion. The use of the third finger seems to be utilized best when it is used to play a half step interval with the first finger. There is less of a spread in the hand

² Fernando Grillo, *Suite I per contrabbasso (1983/2005)* (Mainz: Schott, 2005), 17.

³ Isaia Billè, *Nuovo metodo per contrabbasso* (Milan: Ricordi, 1973).

than if the second finger were used. Please refer to Example 4.3 which illustrates using the first and third finger over three strings.

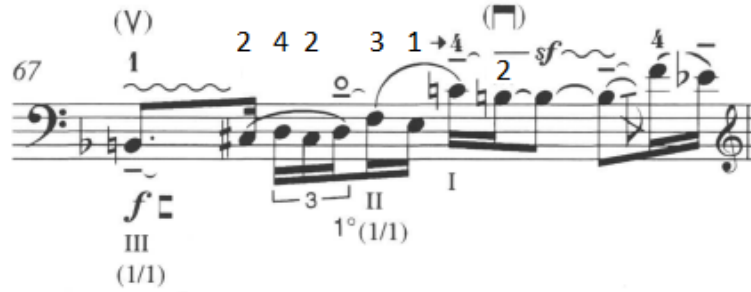


Example 4.3. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement II, m. 77

Then, refer to Example 4.4, which illustrates Grillo's mixing of both second and third finger in a less systematic way. Finally, refer to Example 4.5, which offers an alternative fingering to the same measure still using both fingers to reduce potential strain in the hand.



Example 4.4. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement II, m. 67



Example 4.5. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement II, m. 67

There is one occurrence in *Suite I* where Grillo uses both the second and third finger to alter the intonation of the same pitch (F-natural). This is shown in Example 4.6.

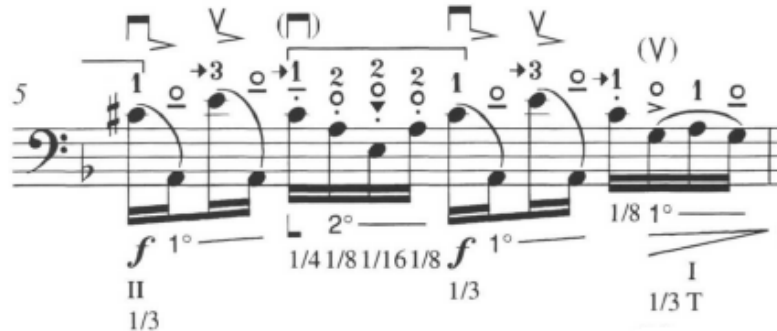


Example 4.6. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement II, m. 77

Extensions and Pivots

Some clarity must be provided on the use of extended hand positions in *Suite I*. Extending beyond the conventional range of the double bass in a fixed position can cause unnecessary strain on the hands. Given this, it may be advisable to use pivots which are more ergonomic. Double basses vary in size and so do the hand sizes of players, and some players

have small enough hands that a small pivot is needed just to access the standard distances of the instrument. Based on existing videos, it seems likely that Grillo played on a smaller instrument. In fact, as shown in Example 4.7, some of his fingerings suggest that he did not struggle with many extended hand positions.

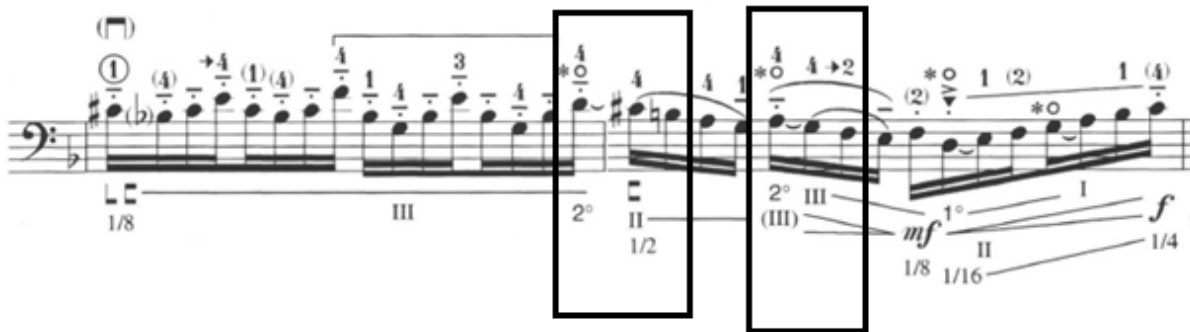


Example 4.7. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement I, m. 5

The extended fingering required to move from the first finger on the C-sharp to the third finger on the E-natural demonstrates that the neck block area of Grillo's double bass was likely not a barrier. The access of the middle range of a double bass varies on the body size and string length of the instrument. A larger double bass and a player with smaller hands might require a thumb on the C-sharp and a third finger on the E-natural with the left hand being in thumb position. As shown in Example 4.8 below, keeping most of this measure in thumb position (from C-sharp to the final C-sharp) could be a good fingering alternative on a larger instrument with a longer string length. An argument for retaining the original fingering could be that Grillo may have wanted the theatrical effect of shifting.



Another alternative fingering that can be helpful is the use of the third finger rather than the fourth finger when playing the second harmonic. The third finger can be better suited for that specific harmonic because the third finger is longer than the fourth finger. On several occasions in the Prelude, Grillo writes a fingering of fourth finger to fourth finger beginning at the second harmonic and moving down by step. An unintended consequence of this fingering is that a potential glissando can occur between the two pitches. Using the third finger at the second harmonic and then moving to a diatonic pitch below with a fourth finger is a suitable alternative. Please refer to Example 4.9 for two instances of this.



Example 4.9. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement I, mm. 2–3

Replacing Some Notation with More Conventional Symbols

As stated in Chapter 3, Grillo often creates symbols for techniques that have established practices. Grillo has a system of notating tablature harmonics and though this technique varies between composers it is important to discuss how some composers have dealt with this in the past. Notating tablature harmonics is problematic and has been approached differently by composers such as Igor Stravinsky and Maurice Ravel, as shown in Examples 4.10 and 4.11.



Example 4.10. Igor Stravinsky, *L'Oiseau de feu*, “*Firebird Suite*” (1910 version), *Danse Infernale*, Rehearsal 135

Stravinsky uses a hollow diamond-shaped note head to indicate where to touch the harmonic and the note below informs the performer which string to use in playing the harmonic.

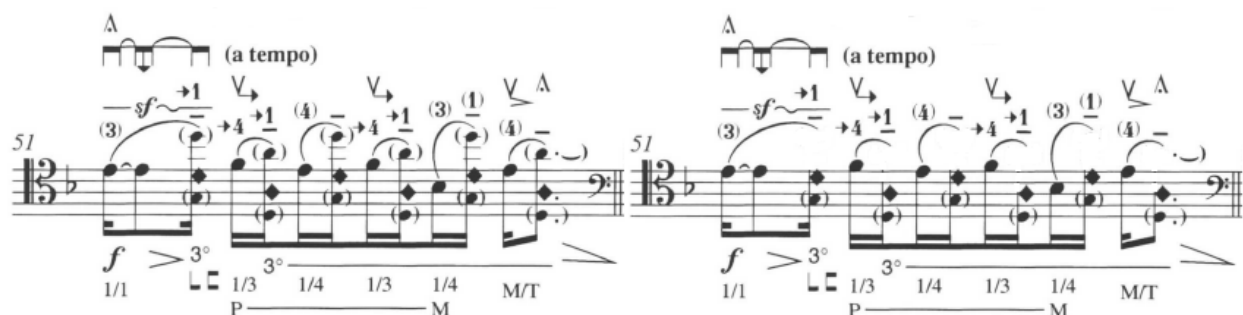
Indicating which string to use in finding this pitch is useful because that A harmonic could also be the first overtone on the A string if notated differently, and consequently it could sound an octave lower than what Stravinsky intended.

Maurice Ravel has a different method in which to notate tablature harmonics. He usually does not include a string reference like Stravinsky but will write what the sounding pitch should be. He occasionally will write a string indication with text such as *sur le La* to indicate that the harmonic needs to be played on the A string. Please refer to Example 4.11.

The image displays a musical score for Maurice Ravel's *Rapsodie Espagnole*. It features four staves for strings, each with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking. The first and third staves include the instruction "ôtez les Sourdines" (remove the mutes). The notation includes "arco" (arco) and "8--" (octave) markings. A "sur le La" (on the A) instruction is present above the second staff. The score concludes with an "attacca" marking. To the right, a separate musical staff shows the sounding pitch for the harmonic, labeled "sur le La" and "(sons réels)" (real sounds), with a "0" indicating the natural harmonic on the A string.

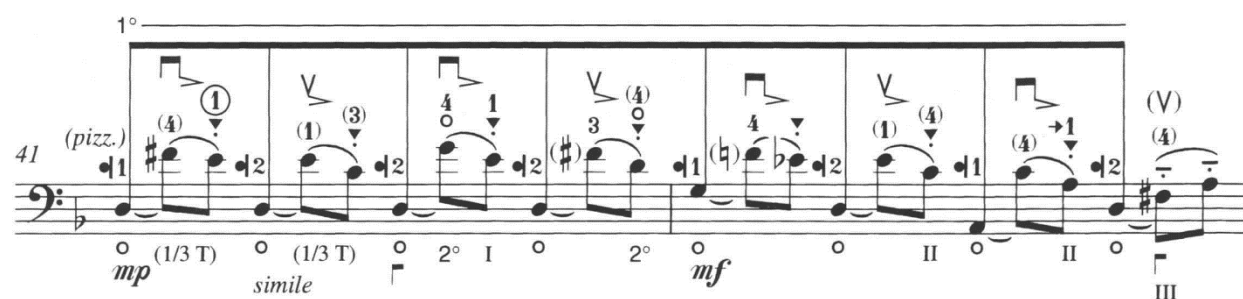
Example 4.11. Maurice Ravel, *Rapsodie Espagnole*, movement I, 2 measures before the end; movement III, 3 measures before the end

Stravinsky's method is probably the clearest way to notate tablature harmonics because, unlike Ravel, he always specifies what string is required in order for the harmonic to be realized. As an alternative, it might be clearer if Grillo's tablature harmonics were notated in a similar fashion. As shown in Example 4.12, this is a simple fix in that only the highest note needs to be removed.

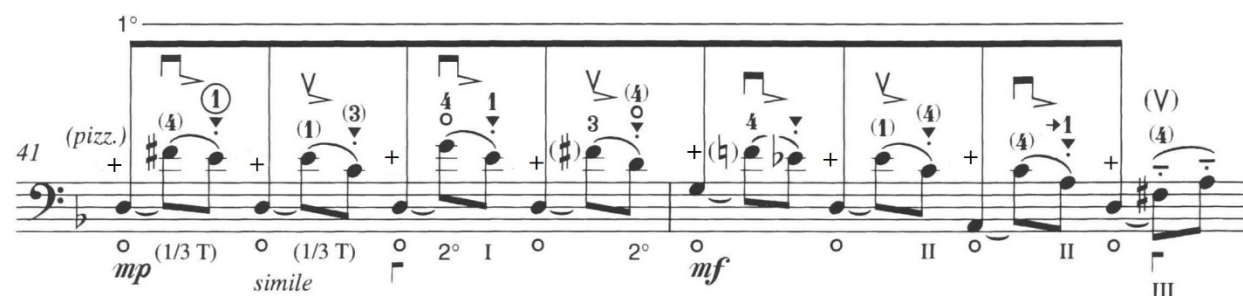


Example 4.12. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement I, m. 51

Left-hand pizzicato is another technique that could benefit from standardization. An addition sign (+) can replace the existing symbol and the fingering choice can be left up to the performer. Please refer to example 4.13 with the original notation and 4.14 for the revised notation.



Example 4.13. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement VI, mm. 41–42



Example 4.14. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement VI, mm. 41–42

Finally, glissandi instructions can also be standardized. As shown in Chapter 3, Grillo's symbol includes a diagonal line with an arc above it. I would suggest a reading with just the diagonal line. Please refer to example 4.15 with the original notation and 4.16 with the suggested change.

Liberamente

(gliss. armonici) (V) (all.) (V) (allargato) (glissando armonici)

44

3 9° 8° 7° 6° 5° (°ad.lib.) 5° (°ad.lib.) 5° (°ad.lib.) 5° 1°

mp mf 1/2 2/3 M/T 1/1 pp (1/1)

Example 4.15. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement IV, m. 44

Liberamente

(gliss. armonici) (V) (all.) (V) (allargato) (glissando armonici)

44

3 9° 8° 7° 6° 5° (°ad.lib.) 5° (°ad.lib.) 5° (°ad.lib.) 5° 1°

mp mf 1/2 2/3 M/T 1/1 pp (1/1)

Example 4.16. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement IV, m. 44

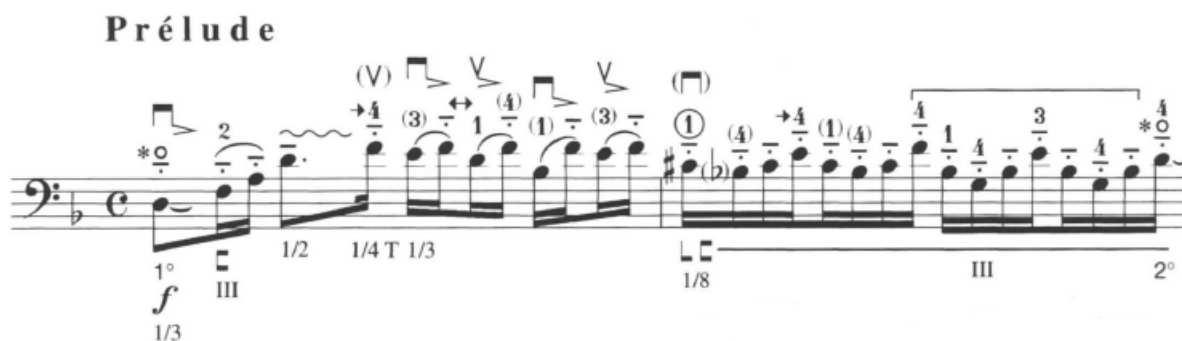
Reduction in Articulation

Grillo's *staccatissimo* articulation could also benefit from being standardized. Example 4.17 contains the original notation and then the same measure with a more standard notation.



Example 4.17. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement III, m. 95

Another reductional element to suggest would be the elimination of many of the *staccato/tenuto* markings when they are placed in succession, as in the first two measures of the Prelude. These articulation markings are the most frequent in *Suite I* and can be considered de facto articulation markings, therefore, justifying their occasional elimination. Please refer to Example 4.18 for original notation and then to Example 4.19 for a suggested reduction.



Example 4.18. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement I, mm. 1–2

The musical score for the bass line of 'The Rose Tree' is written in bass clef, key of B-flat major, and common time (C). The melody begins with a half note B-flat, followed by a quarter note A-flat, and then a quarter note G. The tempo is marked 'f' (forte). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings. The first measure is marked with a '1°' and a '1/3' below it. The second measure is marked with a '1/2' and a '1/4 T 1/3' below it. The third measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The fourth measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The fifth measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The sixth measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The seventh measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The eighth measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The ninth measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The tenth measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The eleventh measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The twelfth measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The thirteenth measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The fourteenth measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The fifteenth measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The sixteenth measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The seventeenth measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The eighteenth measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The nineteenth measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The twentieth measure is marked with a '1/4' and a '1/3' below it. The score ends with a double bar line.

The fractional bow lengths as described in Chapter 3 are intended to yield a specific corresponding articulation. I would suggest that they be removed to reduce some of the notational redundancy in *Suite I*.

The range of this piece extends almost to five octaves and this creates a problem in choosing a clef. This piece frequently has sudden jumps into higher/lower registers and sometimes the clef needs to be changed frequently. Grillo uses bass, treble, and tenor clef in *Suite I* but there are many times when there are excessive ledger lines or frequent clef changes. In certain instances, it might be better to use a two staff system with both bass and treble clef at times. The amount of paper will be increased but it might be easier for the performer to read. Please refer to Example 4.20, which illustrates one instance of frequent clef changes.

Example 4.20. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement II, m. 58

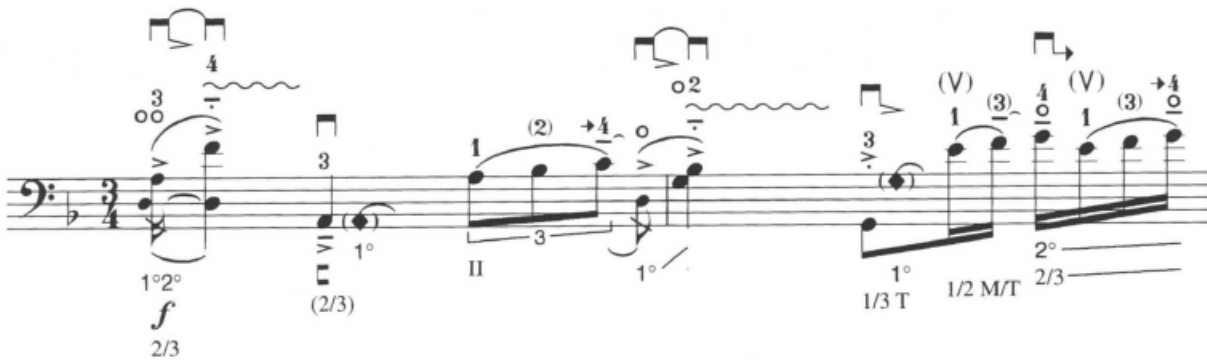
A Notational Approach to Phrasing

Suite I is a polyphonic piece of music, and Grillo beams certain notes to emphasize their structural significance. As shown in Example 4.21, in measure 71 of the Prelude, he beams the first note of every four sixteenth notes together. He beams the C-sharp, A-natural, B-flat, and E-natural together. These pitches collectively form an A dominant chord that resolves to D minor at the conclusion of the cadenza in measure 79. The cadenza functions to delay this resolution in measure 79.

[illegible]

Example 4.21. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement I, m. 71

Grillo also uses articulation in a way that instructs the performer on how to phrase and connect notes in a larger melodic line. Please refer to Example 4.22.

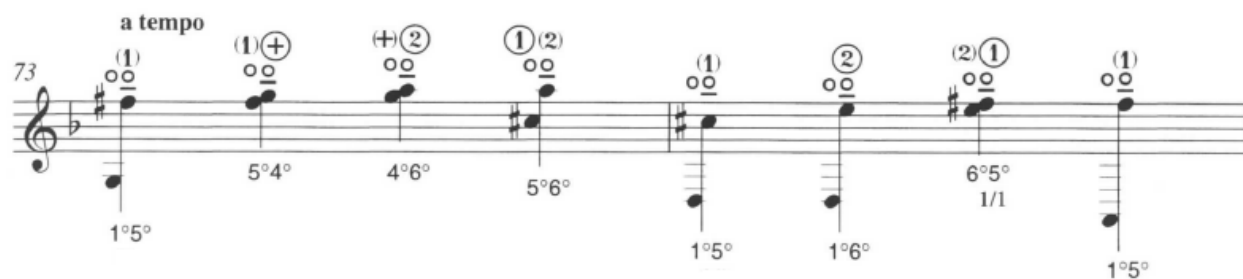


Example 4.22. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement IV, mm. 1–2

He uses the tenuto marking with a tie to connect the C-natural in measure one to the B-flat in measure two. The roll from the open D preceding the double stop in measure two can potentially disrupt the continuity of the top melodic line (C-natural to B-flat), and Grillo places this tied tenuto to indicate that the melody should be continuous. In the second measure, he uses the same articulation to connect the F-natural and the G harmonic. His fingering (1, 3, 4) keeps those three notes in a single position to further illustrate the importance of their connection.

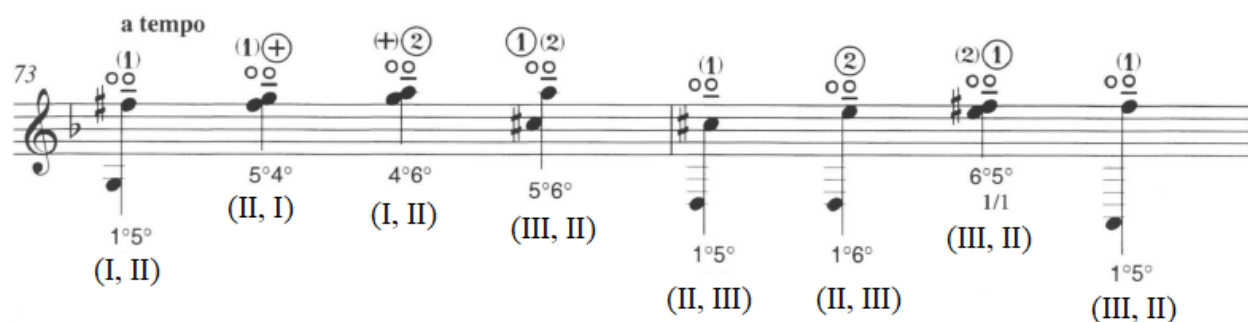
Cautionary String Indications

Grillo often writes double stops that have large pitch ranges. For instance, he will have an open string and a high harmonic that need to be played together. To fulfill this request, it is important to place the bow closer to the bridge in conjunction with a faster bow speed to allow the harmonic to speak, but the tone of the open string will be less focused. Ultimately, the pitch range demands that the bow needs two different contact points and speeds. Please refer to Example 4.23, which illustrates an example of these types of double stops.



Example 4.23. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement II, mm. 73–74

On rare occasions, Grillo does provide cautionary string indications. Considering his frequent use of harmonics, however, it would be helpful to include cautionary string indications more consistently when playing these types of double stops. This is a rare circumstance where I would advocate for increasing the notation. Please refer to Example 4.24 for this notational suggestion.



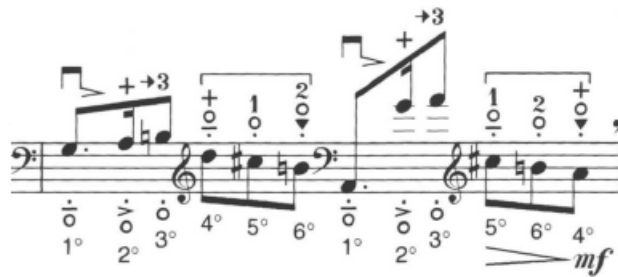
Example 4.24. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement II, mm. 73–74

Finally, Grillo frequently requests that two notes be barred (one finger holds down two notes). I would recommend, however, that this be a cautionary indication and left to discretion of the performer. Barring two notes can be a physically dangerous task, and some performers can do it with ease while others may develop chronic hand pain.

Retaining Some of Grillo's Symbols and Intentions

Grillo developed many symbols for notation that can be helpful for performers. His commitment to the reduction of text through the creation of graphic symbols can be helpful in specific circumstances. His symbols for *vibrato*, *ponticello*, and sound decays are helpful and practical for expressive gestures. Grillo's symbol for sound *portamenti* needs to remain since that is an extended technique created and utilized extensively by Grillo.

It is similarly important that the original harmonic and open string requests be maintained. The sound will be drastically different if open strings and harmonics are alternatively closed. As shown in Example 4.25, a hallmark of *Suite I* is the frequent exploitation of these natural features of the double bass, and the piece would have a drastically different sound without them.



Example 4.25. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement VI, m. 24

In the above example, as Grillo notates it, every single pitch in a single measure corresponds to an open string or harmonic. It is possible to close some of these notes to reduce shifting and string crossings, but this adjustment would hinder the natural ring created by open strings and harmonics.

Furthermore, Grillo was focused on the theatrical element of performance as well, and a larger shift does provide a more significant visual impact for the audience. As he once explained in an interview with Peter Niklas Wilson, audience members listen with their eyes as well as their ears.⁴ Much of the activity in the sound production of a double bass is not hidden by an embouchure, as with a brass instrument. It even has an advantage of visual impact over the other members of the string family because all shifts are comparatively larger on the double bass and easier for the audience to see.

Discussion of Equipment

Ideally, the performer should play *Suite I* on the smallest double bass available. The performer does not have to blend with any other musicians, and the unaccompanied essence of the piece allows for a smaller and more soloistic double bass. In my experience, playing this piece on a string length of 40” versus 42” makes a significant difference. It shortens the frequent shifts that Grillo writes in *Suite I*. The instrument also needs to have a bright and ringy quality of sound, and this can be achieved in two ways. Solo tuning can be more advantageous because it offers a brighter quality to all the harmonics allowing them to ring. In choosing a type of string, it can be advisable to use Spirocore Superflexible solo strings. These were the strings that Grillo used and they seem to be better suited for playing harmonics more cleanly and clearly.⁵ Although Grillo did not include any information about his equipment or set up in the preface of *Suite I*, I had the most success when I achieved a set up as close to Grillo’s as possible. Yes, it is the job of a professional musician to be flexible, but double basses, bows, and accessories vary so much in size, weight, length, and tone color that it becomes an unavoidable discussion. If a performer

⁴ Peter Niklas Wilson, “Music from the Underground,” *Double Bassist* 22 (Autumn 2002): 18.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

happens to play on a double bass with a long string length (e.g. 44”), the fingerings might need to be altered from Grillo’s instructions to accommodate that difference. Also, if a double bassist happens to have a heavy bow (e.g. 160 grams), it might not be possible to achieve a high vertical bow lift off the string after a stroke is finished. Some of these bow strokes might be altogether impossible if the performer does not use an adequate amount of rosin. In conclusion, based on these inevitable variances in equipment, the performer might have to deviate from Grillo’s printed instructions in order to achieve a sound closer to his ideal musical goals in performing *Suite I*.

Chapter 5: THE COMPOSITION OF *SUITE I*

This chapter will focus on the origins of *Suite I*, some notable performances, and the sparse recordings that exist of the entire piece. It will then highlight some of the important features of the work, such as musical conversations Grillo invokes with specific figures, idiomatic writing for the double bass, and expansions of the binary dance models.

Fernando Grillo was inspired to compose *Suite I* in the summer of 1982 while teaching an interpretation course in Città di Castello which is north of Perugia.¹ Grillo composed the Prelude first and then completed the remaining five movements in order, approximately one movement a month. The first version of *Suite I* was completed by 1983.² Later, Grillo's student Enrico Francioni played the Prelude from *Suite I* on a separate program at the Accademia Pescarese in 1986.³ The world premiere of the first version of the entire piece was performed by Francioni on October 30, 1988 in Florence, Italy.⁴ The piece was officially dedicated to Corrado Penta and Amedeo Baldovino, but unofficially, it was dedicated to Francioni whom he considered to be his best student.⁵ There was a recording made after the world premiere by Francioni in the summer of 1989 in Carpegna at the church of San Leo.⁶ I wrote to Francioni to ask him if any early

¹ Enrico Francioni, Program notes to *Tribute to Fernando Grillo*, performed by Enrico Francioni, double bass, Maurizio Barbetti, viola, Francesco Cuoghi, guitar, eStudio and Pinkhouse Lab, 2020, accessed January 11, 2020, <https://store.cdbaby.com/cd/fernandogrillo>.

² Ibid. In order, he composed the Prelude, Allemande, Courante, Sarabande, Gavottes 1 and 2, and the finally the Gigue.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Fernando Grillo, *Suite I per contrabbasso (1983/2005)* (Mainz: Schott, 2005), 8.

⁵ Francioni, program notes to *Tribute to Fernando Grillo*.

⁶ Enrico Francioni [personal website], accessed on January 11, 2020, last modified in January 2020, <https://enricofrancioni.github.io/media.html>.

recordings of this performance were available, and he responded that Grillo made a special request that they remain private.⁷

The world premiere of *Suite I* by Francioni would have marked the first time where the composer did not premiere his own work. This suggests a pedagogical motivation in that it was intended initially for Francioni and future students. The world premiere of the 2005 edition was performed by Mario D'Amato (a former student of Grillo) at the Royal Chapel of Portici in Naples, Italy on April 11, 2007.⁸ The sole commercial recording of *Suite I* for many years was performed by Mark Cauvin, who also studied briefly with Grillo in the fall of 2006, for his album *Transfiguration*.⁹ At the beginning of 2020, a second commercial recording of *Suite I* was performed and released by Francioni on an album dedicated to Fernando Grillo.¹⁰

I argue that Fernando Grillo wanted to promote his legacy as an innovator of the double bass, and *Suite I* was best suited for this purpose. *Suite I* was written to attract a wider audience of double bassists while giving them a small sample of Grillo's more avant-garde side.¹¹ *Suite I* is modelled after a baroque dance suite both in harmonic language and formal design. This is a departure from his earlier compositions, which employ more extended techniques, are generally through composed, and are more theatrical in scope. Two of the most prominent features in *Suite I* are the dialogue that Grillo is creating with specific musical figures and his extensions of

⁷ Personal email correspondence with Enrico Francioni on October 22, 2018.

⁸ Mario D'Amato [personal website], accessed December 20, 2020, last modified 2016, <http://www.mariodamato.net/gallery/audio/>. This is a statement made on Mario D'Amato's personal website, and I have been unable to find any information supporting or denying this assertion. According to his website he was a "continuer of the school of Maestro Fernando Grillo."

⁹ Mark Cauvin, *Transfiguration*, Cauvin performs on double bass, recorded in 2007–2008, Headgap Studios (Melbourne), [2008], CD. This project was funded through the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its Arts funding, and advisory body. Cauvin studied briefly with Grillo and performed other compositions by Grillo on the CD including *Paperoles* and *A Harmonic Study for Mark*.

¹⁰ Francioni, Program notes to *Tribute to Fernando Grillo*.

¹¹ Peter Niklas Wilson, "Music from the Underground," *Double Bassist* 22 (Autumn 2002): 19.

traditional binary dance forms. Grillo engages in musical conversations with J. S. Bach, Pythagoras, and even himself. This notion of musical dialogue will be further explored in this chapter. His extensions can be considered cadenzas in that they often musically contrast what surrounds them. These extensions also balance the number of measures between the A and B sections in binary dance movements and facilitate some of the musical dialogue that Grillo is creating.

Dialogue with J. S. Bach, Pythagoras, and Grillo

Dialogue with J. S. Bach

The most striking feature of *Suite I* is represented by the various types of dialogue that Grillo creates throughout the entire piece. Grillo was dissatisfied with available transcriptions for the J. S. Bach violoncello suites.¹² Grillo never published any transcriptions of the cello suites, which suggests that he felt that they should not be played on the double bass. *Suite I* has much in common with both the second and fifth cello suites by Bach. Grillo uses the key of D minor which is not only a clear reference to the second suite but is advantageous because closely related key modulations work well with the available open strings and harmonics on the double bass. Grillo exploited many of these physical elements of the instrument, as I will discuss further later in this chapter. Grillo also chose gavottes rather than minuets and made some striking similarities to the gavotte movements from Bach's fifth suite. I will now explore similarities in form, melody, and key relationships between both sets of gavottes. Finally, Grillo's Gigue seems to combine elements of both gigue movements from Bach's second and fifth suite.

¹² Ibid.

One example in which Grillo engages in a dialogue with J. S. Bach happens at the end of the *Suite I* Prelude. Leading up to the end of each prelude, both Bach and Grillo structure most of the movement around moving sixteenth notes. This driving and insistent *moto perpetuo* then comes to a sudden halt with sustained chords that conclude both preludes. Bach ends his Prelude with five chords and Grillo ends his Prelude with ten. This could be symbolic of the fact that Grillo's Prelude takes about twice as long to perform as the Prelude from Bach's second cello suite. Grillo's Prelude has 120 measures—roughly twice as many measures as Bach's Prelude, which contains 63 measures. Instead of writing triple and quadruple stops at the end of the Prelude, Grillo writes out how the chords should be rolled. For comparison, I have included the final measures of the Prelude from both Grillo's *Suite I* and Bach's second cello suite in Examples 5.1 and 5.2, respectively.

The image displays a musical score for the final measures of Grillo's *Suite I*, movement I, specifically measures 115 through 120. The score is written in bass clef with a key signature of one flat. It begins with a 'Sostenuto' marking. The notation includes various fingerings (1°, 2°, 1°2°, 1°), dynamics (mf, f), and articulation marks like 'arco' and 'pizz.'. The final measure (120) shows a complex chord with multiple fingerings and a forte dynamic.

Example 5.1. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement I, mm. 115–120



Example 5.2. J. S. Bach, *Suite No. 2 in D minor, BWV 1008*, movement I, mm. 59–62

Comparison of the Chords Present in Both Preludes

In comparing the chord progressions present in the conclusion to both preludes, it is clear that both Bach and Grillo delay the arrival of the final tonic chord, but Grillo expands this delay considerably with the use of secondary dominants, Neapolitan chords, and non-chord tones:

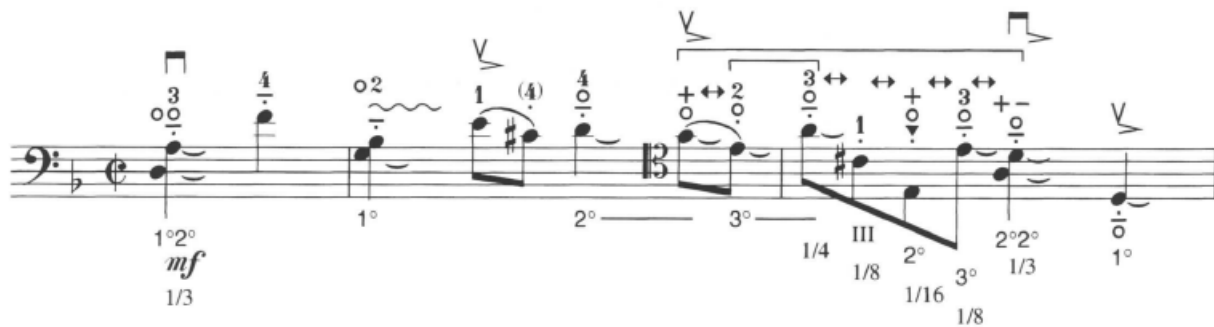
- Bach: V7–V6/4 –V(Sus4)–V–i
- Grillo: i–V–iv–V7/V–iv6–N6–ii–V7–V[d in bass]–i6–(i)

Much of *Suite I* is an homage to the second cello suite, but it is apparent that Bach's fifth suite also influenced Grillo in some significant ways. In this vein, Grillo's Gavottes and Gigue deserve special mention.

Gavottes

Grillo chose to write the *Suite I* Gavottes in a minor key. The only Bach cello suite that contains gavottes in a minor key is the fifth suite. It may be that Grillo was imagining what the second cello suite would sound like if Bach had chosen gavottes instead of minuets. I believe Grillo took this as a compositional challenge to do just that. D minor, the predominant key in *Suite I*, is more idiomatic for the double bass than Bach's fifth suite key of C minor, which works better for the cello. In addition, Bach's fifth cello suite employed a *scordatura* on the violoncello

(lowering the top A string down to a G) which could have been a further source of inspiration for Grillo, who experimented with different tunings in some of his other compositions.¹³ From a melodic standpoint, Grillo's Gavotte I bears a strong resemblance to Bach's fifth suite Gavotte I, as shown in Examples 5.3 and 5.4 (presenting melodic comparisons of Grillo's and Bach's Gavotte I, respectively).



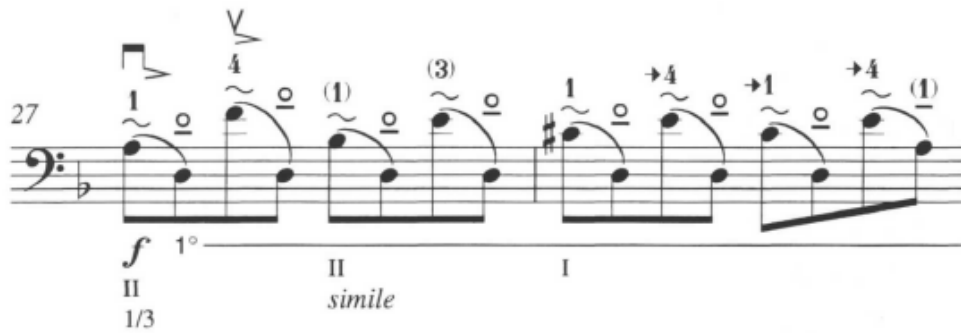
Example 5.3. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement V, mm. 1–2



Example 5.4. J. S. Bach, *Suite No. 5 in C minor*, BWV 1011, movement V, mm. 1–2

¹³ "Ulysses – Fernando Grillo 1°Parte," e-theatre, accessed December 29, 2019, <http://etheatre.altervista.org/videos/ulysses-fernando-grillo-1parte/>. This video is from a 1985 recital by Grillo in which *scordatura* (re-tuning of the double bass) is required for *Penelope Day* (1985). Note also that Grillo writes the description of the video in Latin, rather than Italian—a prime witness to his desire to be in dialogue with Italy's ancient Classical past.

As shown in Examples 5.5 and 5.6, a side-by-side comparison of Grillo's and Bach's approaches to ostinato demonstrates how each composer develops transitional material later in the movement following the expository sections.



Example 5.5. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement V, mm. 27–28



Example 5.6. J. S. Bach, *Suite No. 5 in C minor*, movement V, mm. 15–6

It is important to acknowledge the harmonic and formal similarities between the two sets of gavottes by Grillo and Bach. A large-scale comparison of Grillo's and Bach's dance movement structures demonstrates that Grillo consistently takes an opposing formal approach to Bach—using asymmetrical binary where Bach would use simple binary, or vice versa. For instance, Bach's gigue movements are all asymmetrical in form, as is typical of the Baroque period, but Grillo writes a symmetrical, simple binary form gigue (A section=30 measures, B section=30

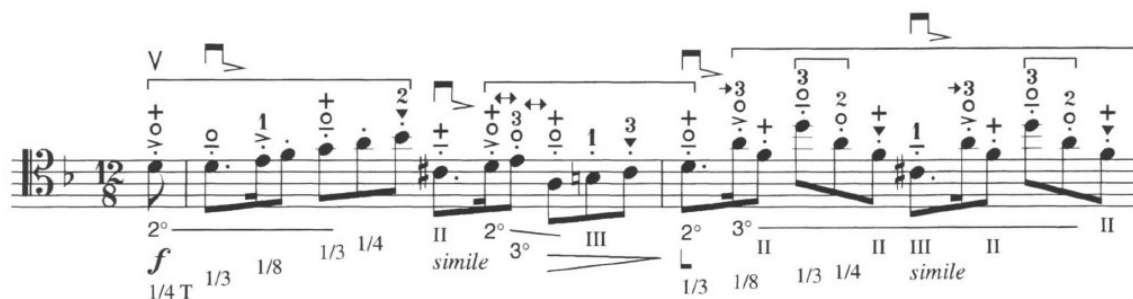
measures). There is one significant exception to this trend, however. Grillo's Gavottes I and II are the only movements of *Suite I* to be structured in an asymmetrical binary form that mirrors exactly the formal structure of Bach's own fifth suite gavotte movements. For example, Gavotte I by Grillo and Gavotte I by Bach both have a 1:2 formal ratio in number of measures (A section=12 measures, B section=24 measures). This formal ratio is similarly mirrored in the harmonic trajectory of each composer's Gavotte I:

- Bach's Gavotte I harmonic outline: A=[i—v] B=[v—i]
- Grillo's Gavotte I harmonic outline: A=[i—V] B=[v—i]

These formal and harmonic parallels demonstrate a possible effort to emulate Bach's approach to the gavotte dance form.

Gigue

Similarly, Grillo's Gigue seems to be a synthesis of both gigue movements from Bach's second and fifth suites. Please refer to Example 5.7 and then compare it to Bach's second suite Gigue in Example 5.8.



Example 5.7. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement VI, mm. 1–2



Example 5.8. J. S. Bach, *Suite No. 2 in D minor*, movement VI, mm. 1–4

From a harmonic standpoint, this comparison demonstrates a congruence in the bass, where the harmony goes from D (minor) to C-sharp/A to A (dominant) and back to D minor. The pace of the harmonic rhythm differs between the two but the overall structural elements are the same. Furthermore, in the first full measure of both passages, the B-flat on a weak beat moving to a C-sharp on a strong beat is another point of melodic-harmonic similarity. In the *Suite I* Gigue, Grillo begins the melodic material in a small range before stretching it out to a larger ambitus.

Grillo's Gigue mirrors also some other unique features of the fifth suite Gigue by Bach. The first, most obvious similarity is the choice in the dotted eighth-note rhythm. As shown in Example 5.9, Bach's fifth suite Gigue is the only gigue movement from any of his cello suites that employs this rhythm.



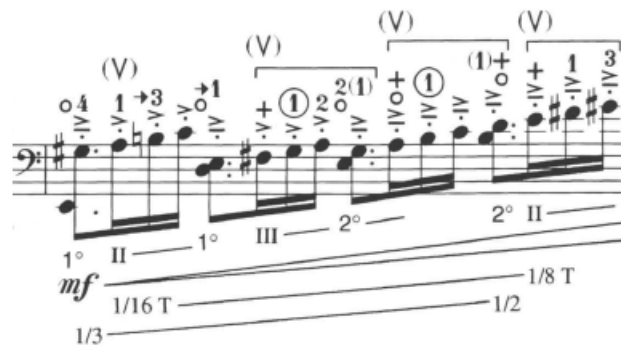
Example 5.9. J. S. Bach, *Suite No. 5 in D minor*, movement VI, mm. 1–2

In the fifth suite Gigue, Bach usually incorporates stepwise falling sixteenth notes to vary the dotted eighth-note rhythm. Grillo, in contrast, writes this same rhythm but inverts it, creating an

ascending stepwise motion. A comparison between the rhythmic and melodic profiles in Bach's and Grillo's respective gigue movements is shown in Examples 5.10 and 5.11.



Example 5.10. J. S. Bach, *Suite No. 5 in D minor*, movement VI, mm. 19–20



Example 5.11. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement VI, m. 48

Idiomatic writing in the Gigue

Fernando Grillo sought to utilize as many harmonics and open strings as possible in order to create melodies founded on the natural musical capacities of the bass. For example, Grillo writes 23 measures of music in the A section of the Gigue using only open strings and harmonics. He creates both polyphonic and monophonic textures throughout this passage. As shown in Example 5.12, Grillo creates a stepwise descending melodic line with harmonics beginning at beat four in measure 22 and lasting through the end of measure 24.

The musical score consists of three systems of music for double bass. Each system begins with a measure number (19, 21, and 23). The notation includes various accidentals and dynamic markings such as *f*, *simile*, and *mf*. The score is divided into three systems, each starting with a measure number (19, 21, 23). The notation includes various accidentals and dynamic markings such as *f*, *simile*, and *mf*. The score is divided into three systems, each starting with a measure number (19, 21, 23). The notation includes various accidentals and dynamic markings such as *f*, *simile*, and *mf*.

Example 5.12. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement VI, mm. 19–24

A passage like this underscores the double bass's unique ability to build melodic structures out of harmonics—something that smaller string instruments, with naturally shorter string lengths, could not do as easily or smoothly.

Dialogue with Pythagoras

Grillo's focus on harmonics stems also from his admiration for the theories attributed to Pythagoras. A closer look at *Suite I* reveals a possible reference to Pythagoras in measure 44 of the Sarabande. Grillo frequently references Pythagoras as one of his musical inspirations both in his writings on music and in his professional chamber ensemble *Pythagoras Strings*, which was

named in honor of the Greek musician and philosopher.¹⁴ In his instructions to *Suite I*, he explains that after the second harmonic (dividing the string into two equal parts), additional harmonics can be played at mathematical points on the string relative to their placement in the overtone series.¹⁵ Grillo demonstrates that the fifth partial on the A string (C-sharp) can be played at all four points dividing the string into five equal sections. This gesture effectively turns the double bass into a Pythagorean monochord, which demonstrates the mathematical nature of harmonics and how these harmonics divide the string into equal parts. This measure also contains several other harmonics in the A overtone series (6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th partials). As shown in Example 5.13, this musical gesture presents some technical challenges for the performer, who needs to hit all four partials in a single downbow. A performer must have a good left-hand orientation with the fingerboard and good bow control near the bridge.

Example 5.13. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement IV, m. 44

¹⁴ *Pythagoras Strings*, accessed January 12, 2020, <http://www.pythagoras-strings.de/>. The *Pythagoras Strings* Quintet was founded in Berlin in 1999.

¹⁵ Grillo, *Suite I*, 24. He includes a chart discussing some possibilities of partials according to the Pythagorean monochord.

In referencing both Bach and Pythagorean theory, Grillo thus places his work in a canonical lineage of artistic and scientific progress throughout the history of Western Art Music.

Dialogue with Himself

This lineage is further amplified by the musical dialogue that Grillo creates with himself through self-borrowing. This is not an unusual compositional technique. Throughout history, composers have borrowed from their own works, embedding self-referential passages into new compositions. For example, in Richard Strauss's *Ein Heldenleben*, Op. 40, he quotes portions of *Don Juan*, Op. 20 and other earlier works. Grillo's *Suite I* does something similar by interpolating an excerpt from his *Taiacis* (1981/82) near the end of the Allemande beginning in measure 63.¹⁶ Unlike *Suite I*, Grillo regularly performed *Taiacis* in recitals. *Taiacis* was composed right before *Suite I*, and his use of this excerpt in his more conventional suite functions as a gateway into his avant-garde and philosophical compositional style. My research into the origin of the word "Taiacis" revealed that it is a reference to Fulcanelli's *Les Demeures Philosophales* (1929).¹⁷ Fulcanelli was an early-twentieth-century avant-garde French author and alchemist, whose true identity was never discovered ("Fulcanelli" was a pen name). This point of self-reference creates more questions than it answers, however. What other musical references could possibly exist in *Suite I*? The full passage from *Taiacis* at the end of Grillo's Allemande is presented in Example 5.14.

¹⁶ Fernando Grillo, "Taiacis (1981/82) -- Gstüss (1975)," YouTube, accessed on December 29, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXaMExVVtDo>.

¹⁷ Fulcanelli, *The Dwelling of the Philosophers*, translated by Brigitte Donvez and Lionel Perrin, Venerabilis Opus, accessed May 1, 2020, http://www.venerabilisopus.org/en/books-samael-aun-weor-gnostic-sacred-esoteric-spiritual/pdf/200/226_fulcanelli-the-dwellings-of-the-philosophers.pdf.

Extensions and Cadenzas

Finally, Grillo expands the traditional binary dance forms by including extensions that serve as cadenzas or codas. As I will discuss below, these sections function in several different ways. Grillo identifies these sections by demarcating the beginning and end points with open double bar lines, sometimes in conjunction with musical pauses like breath marks ('). He also identifies these sections with titles such as *Liberamente*, *Quasi cadenza*, *Mosso*, or *Muovendo*. Occasionally, but not always, the inner bar lines of those sections are dotted bar lines which indicate that the tempo can be less strict. I will now outline how the cadenzas function in each of the movements.

Prelude

The Prelude features four cadenzas and Grillo titles these sections “Liberamente” (or “freely”—see measures 50–51, 60–64, 72–78, and 111–114). The cadenzas contrast the constant motion of the sixteenth notes (which comprise almost the entire movement) in both rhythm and unrelated melodic content. In this way, they function as a significant break in tone and character. I will display the first two cadenzas and how they function together. Measures 50–51 (Example 5.15) provide a stasis-like quality, foreshadowing the longer cadenza still to come. The subsequent cadenza is longer and much freer from the established tonality of the Prelude and extends the tessitura of the double bass upward with harmonics (Example 5.16).

Liberamente (a tempo)

(a tempo)

f $\frac{1}{1}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ M/T

f $\frac{1}{1}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ M/T

Example 5.15. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement I, mm. 50–51

Liberamente

(allargato) (V)

mf $\frac{1}{1}$ $\frac{1}{3}$

(allargando) **(stringendo)** (V)

f $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{8}$ $\frac{1}{8}$ $\frac{1}{2}$ M/T

(a tempo)

mp $\frac{1}{1}$ $\frac{1}{2}$ $\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{8}$ T

f $\frac{1}{3}$ $\frac{1}{8}$ T

(allargato)

Example 5.16. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement I, mm. 60–64

Allemande

The Allemande has the largest expansion of the binary dance form in the entire suite. There are seven cadenzas in total (two in the A section and 5 in the B section). These cadenzas contain three characteristics in common: 1) they present new melodic material; 2) they are demarcated by hollow double bar lines; and 3) they contain expressive titles such as *Liberamente*, *Maestoso*, *Muovendo*, *Quasi Cadenza*, and *Molto Mosso*. The cadenzas are placed mostly in the B section and greatly augment the movement in length. What is worth mentioning again is that in one of these cadenzas, Grillo quotes his avant-garde recital piece *Taiacis* (mm. 63–82), as presented in the earlier Example 5.14.

Courante

The Courante features a single formal expansion that serves as a coda (mm. 86–102). As shown in Example 5.17, this coda resembles what could have been a bowing exercise that Grillo would assign to his students. It suggests that there was likely an improvisatory component to his compositional process. As Grillo explained in an interview with Peter Niklas Wilson, “Even when I improvise, I always think compositionally.”¹⁸ Given this, I believe improvising and composing were interchangeable processes for him, and this aspect of his musical approach is borne out in the coda to the Courante movement of *Suite I*.

¹⁸ Wilson, “Music from the Underground,” 19.

[illegible]

Example 5.17. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement III, mm. 86–91

Sarabande

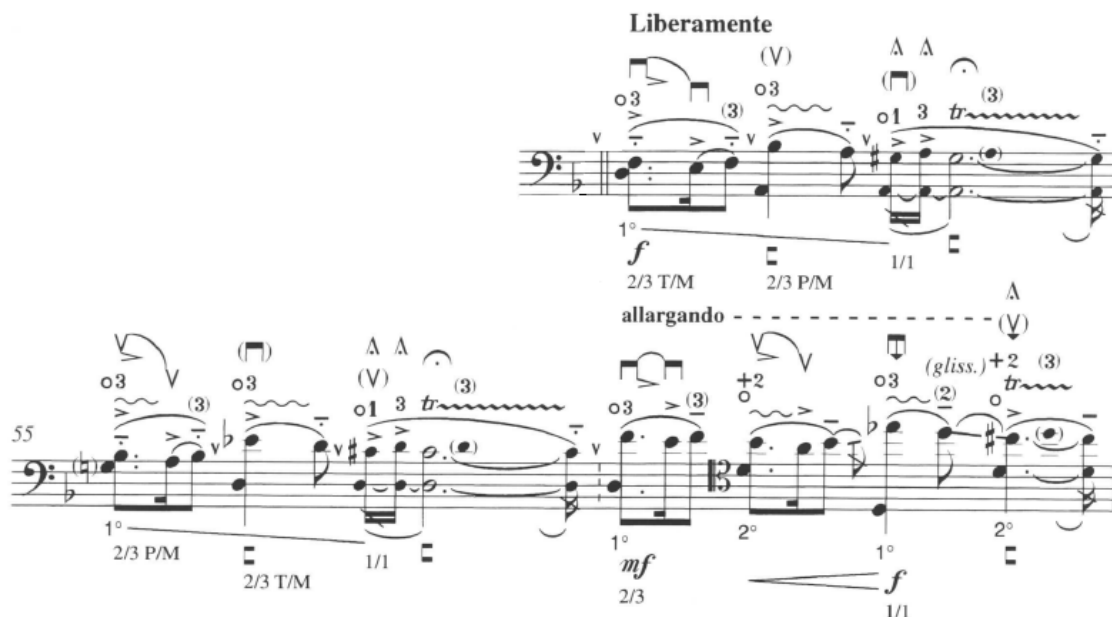
The Sarabande features one cadenza and is a musical reference to the Pythagorean monochord (m. 44), as shown in the previous Example 5.13.

Gavotte II

The single expansion of the fifth movement gavottes is a coda in Gavotte II (mm. 11–20). It is labeled *Muovendo*, presents new melodic material, expands the B section by nine and a half measures to a total of sixteen measures, and sets up the return to Gavotte I.

Gigue

The Gigue features one extension, which serves to correct an odd number of measures (5+3) from a previous phrase, allowing for the final return of D minor from A minor. This passage is shown in Example 5.18.



Example 5.18. Grillo, *Suite I*, movement VI, mm. 54–56

Final Remarks

Suite I is a remarkable piece in its attention to detail, its mix of neoclassical and avant-garde elements, and its unusual notational specificity. In all of these ways, it provides a significant lens into the artistry of Fernando Grillo. A central goal of this project was to distill many of the performance requests that Grillo wanted in his composition and to explain some of its foundational structural elements. At an individual level, these requests seem reasonable, but they quickly become complicated by the immense level of notational complexity in *Suite I*—making it difficult to ascertain what is hierarchically important in various portions of the composition. As I have shown, this complexity is necessary at times, but could also be substantially simplified in some cases without losing the compositional integrity of Grillo's work. Yes, it is a new contemporary approach to specifying sound parameters, but it needs to draw in double bassists rather than intimidate them.

Stefano Scodanibbio made a valuable observation when describing Grillo's *Paperoles*: "a manifest where more than 30 techniques of the modern contrabass are concentrated in just a little over 3 minutes, specifically notated almost to fetishism."¹⁹ This observation is relevant to *Suite I* as well. The notation in Grillo's suite reaches a point where any performer could be overwhelmed by the amount information necessary to produce just one note. As a work written for the specific capabilities of its featured instrument, *Suite I* is an important addition to the solo repertoire of the double bass. With the analysis provided here, it is my hope that double bassists and scholars are able to give this work the attention and consideration that it deserves.

¹⁹ Håkon Thelin, "A Folk Music for the Double Bass," accessed January 23, 2020, <http://haakonthelein.com/multiphonics/uploads/files/5%20Folk/A%20Folk%20Music%20for%20the%20Double%20Bass.pdf>. This article cites the program notes to Stefano Scodanibbio's "Geografia amorosa, Col-legno, 2000, translation by Steven Lindberg.

Appendix A: NOTATIONAL CHART OF GRILLO'S SYMBOLS

New symbols for old techniques

Left hand pizzicati

- Pluck with the left hand and use the digits (+, 1, 2, 3, or 4)

Grillo's symbols

•+ •1 •2 •3 •4

Conventional symbol

+

Pivots and extensions

Pivots and extensions augment the traditional left hand position*

*Traditional hand position:

Whole-step: 1 and 4

Half-step: 1 and 2/3 or 2/3 and 4

Grillo's symbols



Pivot between two notes

Conventional symbol

1 — 4 (— is placed between notes)



Extension between two notes

Glissandi

Grillo's symbols

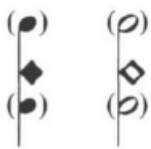


Conventional symbol

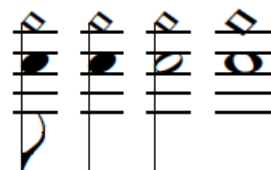


Tablature Harmonics

Grillo's symbols



Conventional symbols



Expansion of existing symbols

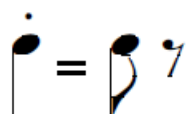
Articulation

Grillo's articulation scale from shortest to longest in duration



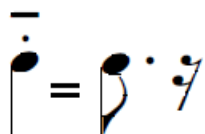
Conventional

Staccato



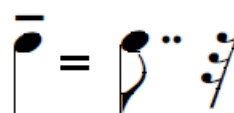
(1/2)

Tenuto/Staccato



(3/4)

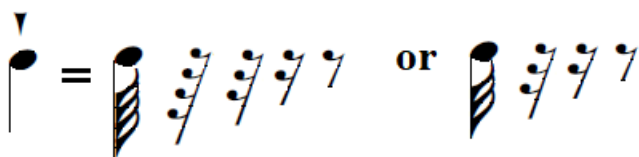
Tenuto



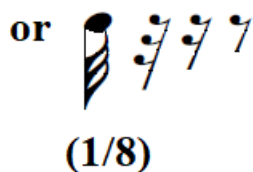
(7/8)

Less conventional

Staccatissimo



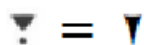
(1/16)



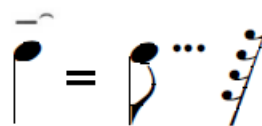
(1/8)



(1/4)



Long Tenuto



(15/16)

Dynamics

Intermediary dynamics

┐ = more └ = less □ = same

Put in the context of conventional dynamic symbols

p ┐ *mp* ┐ *mf* ┐ *f* ┐ *ff*
ff └ *f* └ *mf* └ *mp* └ *p*

Musical pauses (from short to long)

Very short pause

v

Comma

,

Short Fermata

Λ

Fermata

⌒

Creation of New Symbols

Symbols that replace prose

Ponticello

⌞

∨

Ponticello (extreme)

⌞

∨

Sul tasto

⌞

∨

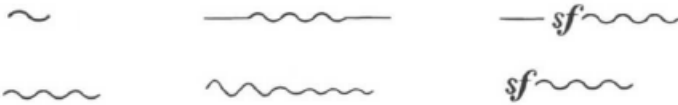
Sul tasto (extreme)

⌞

∨

Vibrato

Examples of variance



Phenomena and techniques lacking symbols

Sympathetic string vibrations



Sound portamenti

Up



Down



Lateral pulling of string with the thumb



Compound bowing instructions

Diminuendo effect



Crescendo effect



Move bow towards the tip



Move bow towards the frog



Grillo's graphic instructions on how to produce a sound with the bow (3 steps)

1. Press hair on the string



2. Pull the string without making a sound



3. Release the bow from the hair



Appendix B: SCHOTT COPYRIGHT LICENSE

Copyright information on any score image used from *Suite I*:

Fernando Grillo SUITE I for double bass

Copyright© 2005 Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany

All Rights Reserved.

Used by permission of European American Music Distributors Company, sole U.S. and Canadian agent for Schott Music GmbH & Co. KG, Mainz, Germany

Bibliography

Articles, Books, and Other Texts

Black, Robert. "The Latest Score: Suite I (1983/2005) Fernando Grillo." *Bass World: The Journal of the International Society of Bassists* 30 no. 3 (February 2007): 47–48.

"Fernando Grillo (1946–2013)," *The Strad*, October 2013, 12.

Grillo, Fernando. [Autobiography]. Roma: Elettromigraf, 1981.

Heyes, David. "CD reviews—'Penderecki: Symphony No. 2; Bruzdowicz: Bass concerto'." *Double Bassist* 2 (Autumn 1996): 62–63.

Schoenen, Hans. "Bass Symposium at Freiburg University." *Journal of the International Society of Bassists* 2, no. 1 (1975): 112.

Turetzky, Bertram. *The Contemporary Contrabass*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.

———. "Review of *Paperoles, per contrabbasso* by Fernando Grillo." *Notes* (Music Library Association Second Series) 35, no. 4 (June 1979): 984–86.

Wilson, Peter Niklas. "Music from the Underground." *Double Bassist* 22 (Autumn 2002): 16–19.

Online Sources

Cahill, Greg. "Stefano Scodanibbio." *North Bay Bohemian*. November 13, 2003. Accessed December 20, 2019. <http://www.bohemian.com/northbay/stefano-scodanibbio/Content?oid=2179273>.

D'Amato, Mario. "Mario D'Amato." [Personal Website]. Last modified 2016. Accessed September 17, 2019. <http://www.mariodamato.net/about/>.

Francioni, Enrico. "Enrico Francioni: Composer, Double Bass Player and Teacher." [Personal Website]. Last modified in January 2020. Accessed January 11, 2020. <https://enricofrancioni.github.io/media.html>.

Fulcanelli. *The Dwelling of the Philosophers*. Translated by Brigitte Donvez and Lionel Perrin. Venerabilis Opus. Accessed May 1, 2020. http://www.venerabilisopus.org/en/books-samael-aun-weor-gnostic-sacred-esoteric-spiritual/pdf/200/226_fulcanelli-the-dwellings-of-the-philosophers.pdf.

"Grillo Fernando." *Il Saxofono Italiano*. Accessed on 12/24/19. <https://www.ilsaxofonoitaliano.it/artisti/grillo-fernando/>.

- Grillo, Fernando. "Fernando Grillo: Interpreter and Composer." [Personal Website]. Last modified on September 22, 2004. Accessed on December 29, 2019 on the Wayback Machine Internet Archive. <https://web.archive.org/web/20060622101442/http://www.fernandogrillo.net/nuke/index.php>.
- Grillo, Fernando. "Fernando Grillo - Suite I (1983/2005)." Contrabbasso italiano - I forum di musicherie. Moderated by Vito Liuzzi. Last modified July 8, 2008. Accessed December 23, 2019. <http://www.contrabbassoitaliano.it/cgi-bin/forum/YaBB.cgi?num=1214997218>.
- Korb, Kristin. "In Passing: Fernando Grillo." International Society of Bassists. Last modified August 19, 2013. Accessed April 26, 2015. <http://isbconnect.org/fernando-grillo/>.
- Liuzzi, Vito. "Fernando Grillo morto suicida (23/07/'13)." The Double Bass Blog - "il Contrabbasso" (blog). July 24, 2013. Accessed on December 27, 2019. <http://liuzzivito.blogspot.com/2013/07/fernando-grillo-morto-suicida-230713.html>.
- Porcu, Andrea, and Jessica Porcu. "Fernando Grillo: Interpreter and Composer." List of Works. Last modified 2013. Accessed December 29, 2019 on the Wayback Machine Internet Archive. <https://web.archive.org/web/20131108074227/http://www.fernandogrillo.it/list-of-works>.
- "Pythagoras Strings." Accessed January 12, 2020, <http://www.pythagoras-strings.de/>.
- Sciasca, Stefano. "Fernando Grillo 'Suite I per cb.' - Ed. Schott." Contrabbasso italiano - I forum di musicherie. Moderated by Vito Liuzzi. Last modified June 19, 2008. Accessed December 27, 2019. <http://www.contrabbassoitaliano.it/cgi-bin/forum/YaBB.cgi?num=1166538590/0>.
- Smith, Damon. "RIP Fernando Grillo?" TalkBass. Moderated by Chris Fitzgerald. Last modified December 7, 2017. Accessed December 24, 2019. <https://www.talkbass.com/threads/rip-fernando-grillo.1001729/>.
- Thelin, Håkon. "A Folk Music for the Double Bass." [Personal Website]. Accessed on December 17, 2019. <http://haakonthelein.com/multiphonics/uploads/files/5%20Folk/A%20Folk%20Music%20for%20the%20Double%20Bass.pdf>.
- . "Bowed-string Multiphonics Analyzed by Use of Impulse Response and the Poisson Summation Formula." *Acoustical Society of America* (2012). Accessed on 12/23/19. <http://knutsacoustics.com/files/guettler-thelin-jasa-multiphonics.pdf>.
- . "Multiphonics on the Double Bass: An Investigation on the Development and Use of Multiphonics on the Double Bass in Contemporary Music." DM diss., Norway Academy of Music, 2011. Accessed on December 23, 2019.

<http://haakontheelin.com/multiphonics/uploads/files/4%20Multiphonics/Multiphonics%20on%20the%20Double%20Bass.pdf>.

———. Liner Notes to *A Stefano Scodanibbio*, performed by Håkon Thelin on double bass, Atterklang 2014, CD. Accessed December 21, 2019.
https://issuu.com/haakontheelin/docs/aklang309_booklet.

Unterberger, Richie. "Review of Fernando Grillo's album *Fluvine*." Allmusic. Accessed April 25, 2015. <http://www.allmusic.com/album/fluvine-mw0000132839>.

Recordings

Baldani, Antonio. "Cultura d'estate 2017: Un omaggio a Fernando Grillo." YouTube. Accessed April 7, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6BrYDzh418>.

Bryce. "R.I.P. Fernando Grillo." WFMU. Last modified August 2, 2013. Accessed December 23, 2019. <http://www.wfmua.org/playlists/shows/51762>.

Cauvin, Mark. *Transfiguration: A Collection of Modern Works which Serve to Explore and Interpret the Outer Tonal Qualities of and Harmonic Possibilities of the Double Bass*. Cauvin performs on double bass. Recorded in 2007–2008. Head Gap Studios, Melbourne. Compact Disc. 2008.

D'Amato, Mario. [Personal Website]. Last modified 2016. Accessed September 17, 2019.
<http://www.mariodamato.net/gallery/audio/>.

"Fernando Grillo." YouTube. Last modified June 13, 2012. Accessed April 12, 2015.
<https://www.youtube.com/user/FernandoGrilloMusic/videos>.

"Fernando Grillo." Vimeo. Last modified September 5, 2012. Accessed April 16, 2015
<https://vimeo.com/user13176668>.

Francioni, Enrico. "Tribute to Fernando Grillo." YouTube. Released September 30, 2019.
Monsano, Italy eStudio and Pinkhouse Lab. Digital recording accessed January 10, 2020.
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOnWzfjFeEPZ_tt5E2_neaw.

Grillo, Fernando. *Fluvine*. Milan: Cramp Records, 1976. Recorded at Studi Ricordi. Compact Disc. Reissued by Strange Days Records in Japan by 2007.

———. *Symphony No. 2*, by Krzysztof Penderecki; *Concerto for double bass and orchestra*, by Joanna Bruzdowicz; *Violin concerto*, by Joanna Bruzdowicz. Fernando Grillo performs on double bass with Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Jacek Kasprzyk (1st work); State Philharmonic Orchestra "Arthur Rubinstein" in Lodz, conducted by Andrzej Markowski (2nd-3rd works). Southwater/Olympia OCD 329. Compact Disc. 1989.

Riboli, Davide. [Various Recording of and with Fernando Grillo]. SoundCloud. Accessed September 9, 2019. <https://soundcloud.com/davideriboli>.

Tintillini, Benedetta. "Fernando Grillo." YouTube. Video posted November 8, 2013. Accessed April 14, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXaMExVVtDo>.

"Ulysses – Fernando Grillo 1°Parte." e-theatre. Last modified March 6, 2014. Accessed December 29, 2019. <http://etheatre.altervista.org/videos/ulysses-fernando-grillo-1parte/>.

Published Scores

Berio, Luciano. *Psy per contrabbasso solo*. Vienna: Universal Edition, 1989.

———. *Sequenza XIVb: Versione per contrabbasso di Stefano Scodanibbio*. Vienna: Universal Edition, 2006.

Billè, Isaia. *Nuovo metodo per contrabbasso*. Milan: Ricordi, 1973.

Donatoni, Franco. *Lem: Due pezzi per contrabbasso*. Milan: Ricordi, 1988.

Druckman, Jacob. *Valentine: For Solo Contrabass*. New York: Boosey & Hawkes, 1970.

Fryba, Hans. *Suite in the Olden Style*. Edited by Josef Weinberger. London: Weinberger, 1954.

Grillo, Fernando. *Ambre: Per contrabbasso*. Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 1977.

———. *Etolie: Per violoncello*. Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 1976.

———. *Itesi: Per contrabbasso solo (1973–aprile 1978)*. Milan: printed by the author, 1977.

———. *Paperoles: Per contrabbasso*. Milan: Edizioni Suvini Zerboni, 1977.

———. *Soror mystica: Per contrabbasso (1978/79)*. Mainz: Schott, 2013.

———. *Suite I per contrabbasso (1983/2005)*. Mainz: Schott, 2005.

Petracchi, Francesco. *Simplified Higher Technique for Double Bass*. Introduction by Rodney Sladford. London: York Edition, 1982.

Scodanibbio, Stefano. *e/statico per contrabbasso solo*. Self-published, March 1980.

Xenakis, Iannis. *Theraps*. Edited by Barry Guy. Paris: Éditions Salabert, 1976.

Zbinden, Julien-François. *Hommage à J. S. Bach*, Op. 44. Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1969.